

BEGINNINGS
OF
RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

ADAMS SHERMAN HILL

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



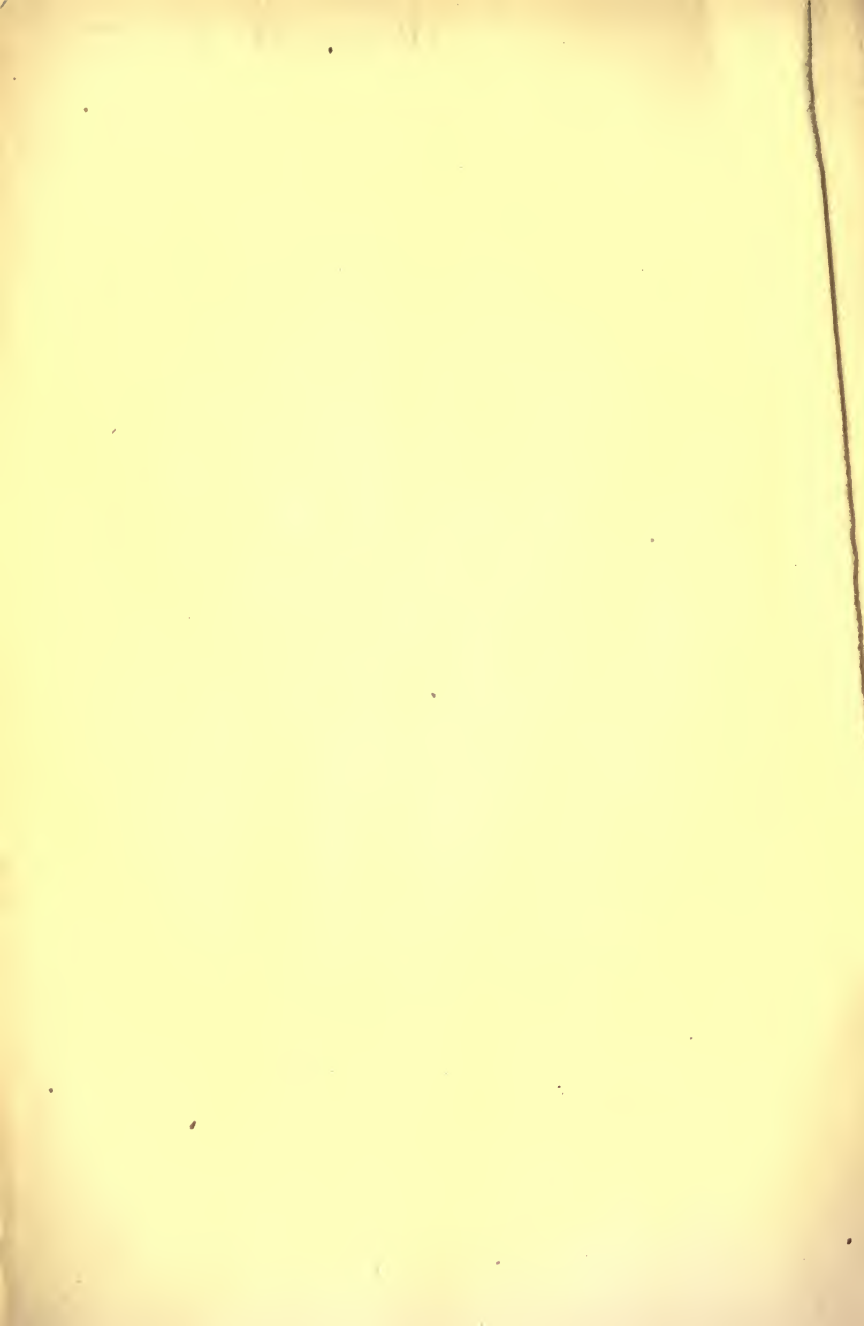
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BEGINNINGS OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

INCLUDING

PRACTICAL EXERCISES IN ENGLISH

BY

ADAMS SHERMAN HILL

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IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

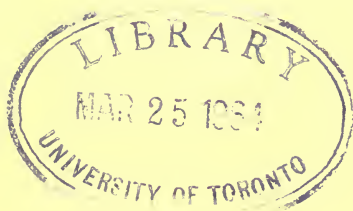


NEW YORK .:. CINCINNATI .:. CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

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PREFACE

WHILE I have been at work on this book, I have had constantly in mind the needs of pupils in secondary schools who are learning to express themselves with the pen. Toward supplying these needs, little can, in my judgment, be contributed by treatises on the theory or the science of rhetoric, by cut-and-dried methods of instruction, or by diagrams, skeleton essays, or other mechanical devices. A young writer will not do so well when he is helped along a smooth and well-travelled highway of commonplace as when he is encouraged to strike out a path for himself.

The best teacher of English composition is he who stimulates his pupils to put their natural selves into all that they write. With this object in view, he will provide for them, or will tell them how to provide for themselves, subjects which are closely connected with their work or their play and in which they take a living interest; he will give them freedom in the treatment of their material; and he will help them to remove obstacles, small or great, that lie between what they think and what they write.

In the removal of obstacles between thought and expression, this book will, I hope, be of service; for it aims to show a young writer how to present what he has to say in the best English within his reach, and in a form adapted to his purpose.

The "Beginnings of Rhetoric and Composition" has many points of resemblance to "The Foundations of

Rhetoric," as those who are familiar with the earlier volume will not fail to perceive. Both books are intended to aid in a practical way those who are traversing the ground between elementary grammar and advanced rhetoric; both lay stress on correct rather than on incorrect forms, and on better rather than on worse modes of expression. The "Beginnings" is, however, notwithstanding the omission of the Introduction, the section entitled "Additional Examples," and the Appendix, which together fill more than sixty pages of the "Foundations," much larger than that book: it contains some new material, as, for instance, a chapter on punctuation and one on letter-writing; it dwells at greater length on important questions, as in the section "Shall or Will?"; it explains matters which in the "Foundations" had been left to the teacher, as distinctions between words that are often confounded with one another; and it contains exercises on every important point,—exercises so numerous as to satisfy the requirements of the most painstaking teacher, and so varied as to leave ample room for selection.

With Mr. H. G. Buehler's permission, I have taken from his book of exercises (published for use with my "Foundations of Rhetoric") whatever suited my purpose, including some examples drawn from his experience in the class-room, and some forms of exercises originated by him which enable teachers to drill their pupils in good English without ~~harming~~ harming them by bad.

For valuable assistance in various ways I am indebted to Miss E. A. Withey, Miss A. F. Rowe, and my colleagues Professor L. B. R. Briggs, Professor F. N. Robinson, and Mr. Pierre la Rose.

A. S. H.

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PART I

CORRECT AND INCORRECT FORMS OF
EXPRESSION

BEGINNINGS OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

CHAPTER I

GOOD ENGLISH DEFINED

WORDS are or are not words for the purposes of English prose composition according as they are or are not in use at the present time, in all parts of the country, and in the works of authors of established reputation. The English that is in PRESENT, NATIONAL, and REPUTABLE USE is GOOD ENGLISH.

Present Use. — Words in present use are to be distinguished both from those which were once, but are no longer, good English and from those which have not yet secured admission to the language. The former class includes words that are obsolete (entirely out of use), or obsolescent (passing out of use), or archaic (old-fashioned). The latter class includes would-be words of all kinds, from those which have for years vainly tried to get into the language to those which have just been invented by persons of limited vocabularies or of lazy minds. An old word may be revived on occasion, and may, if it supplies a real need, reëstablish itself in present use; a new word, or an old word in a new form or a new sense, may in course of time become a permanent part of the language. In both cases, time alone can decide.

A word that is in present use may be very old, as “cart”; or comparatively new, “omnibus”; or very new,

"bicycle." It may have come from the Anglo-Saxon, as "tooth"; from the Latin, "quorum"; from the Greek, "dogma"; from the French, "etiquette"; from the Dutch, "yacht"; from the Arabic, "alkali"; from the North American Indian, "succotash"; from a caricature in a political campaign, "gerrymander"; from the name of an inventor, "daguerreotype"; from a character in fiction, "quixotic"; from the inventive brain of a chemist, "gas"; or from an unknown source, "caucus."

English will no doubt be enriched in the future, as it has been in the past, by words from other languages; but it will probably reject, as it has rejected in the past, many candidates for admission. Among the foreign expressions that cannot now be regarded as English, but that may in time be naturalized, are: *abattoir* for "slaughter-house," *al fresco* for "outdoor," *bas-bleu* for "blue-stockings," *bête noire* for "bugbear," *coup de soleil* for "sunstroke," *élan* for "impetuosity," *mal de mer* for "seasickness."

Words may be in present use for verse or for historical novels, but not for ordinary prose: *e.g.*¹ *carven* for "carved," *doff* for "take off," *don* for "put on," *dole* for "grief," *enow* for "enough," *ere* for "before," *erst* or *whilom* for "once" or "former," *hath* for "has," *ken* for "range of vision," *kine* for "cows," *shoon* for "shoes," *sooth* for "true," *steed* for "horse," *stilly* for "still," *twain*² for "two," *vale* for "valley," *welkin* for "sky," *wot* for "know."

National Use. — A word is in national use if it is understood, and understood in the same sense, by intelligent persons in all parts of the country.

A word that, either in itself or in the meaning given to it, is peculiar to one section of the country is not national: *e.g.* *barge* for a kind of omnibus, *gums* for "india-rubber overshoes," *hobo* for "tramp," *prairie-schooner* for

¹ *E.g., exempli gratia*, "for example."

² "Mark Twain," the pseudonym of Mr. Clemens, was originally a phrase which the pilots of the Mississippi steamboats shouted when they took soundings. They found that "twain" could be heard farther than "two."

a kind of family wagon, *right* for "very," *stoop* for "porch," *to allow*, *to calculate*; or *to reckon* for "to assert" or "to suppose," *to lope* (of a horse), *to tote* or *to pack* for "to carry," *to watch out* for "to be careful."

A word that, either in itself or in the meaning given to it, is peculiar to one class or profession is not national: *e.g.* in painters' dialect, *scumbling*; in medical dialect, *cadaver*, *prognosis*; in sporting dialect, *to break the record*; in college dialect, *campus*, *goody*, *grind*, *snap*; in nautical dialect, *box-hauling*, *douse the topsails*, *in stays*, *to luff*; in dressmakers' dialect, *to cut on the bias*; in miners' dialect, *to get down to bed-rock*, *to pan out*, *to peter out*, *to strike oil*; in the dialect of the race-course, *to handicap*; in the dialect of photographers, *to focus*; in legal dialect, *on the docket*, *to wit*; in business dialect, *above par*, *in our line*, *to pool*, *to take stock in*. Such expressions, though they have no place in writings intended for the general reader, are appropriate in treatises written for those who are familiar with the subject in hand; for they are technically correct, and they express the precise meaning intended. In a book on consumption, for example, that is to be read by physicians, or in an account of a game of base-ball that is to be read by proficients in base-ball, words that are in professional, but not in national, use may properly be employed.

For Americans, a word that, however common in Great Britain, is very rarely used in the United States is not national. An American should say "coal" rather than *coals*, "corn" rather than *maize*, "faucet" rather than *tap*, "filling" rather than *stopping* (teeth), "mucilage" rather than *gum*, "pitcher" rather than *jug*, "rare" rather than *underdone* (beef), "canned" rather than *tinned* (food), "sidewalk" rather than *pavement* or *footway*, "spool" rather than *reel*, "ticket-office" rather than *booking-office*. On general grounds, we may prefer *lift* to "elevator," or *post-card* to "postal card"; but as *lift* and *post-card*, though

universal in England, are rarely seen or heard in America, we should be slow to use them here. It is an affectation to differ ostentatiously from our neighbors.

Since, however, uniformity in the language of English-speaking persons is desirable, there is ground for preferring a word that is in universal use in England and is not unusual in America to one that is common here but unknown there: thus, "railway" is preferable to *railroad*, "station" to *dépôt*, "veranda" to *piazza*, "clever" in the sense of "quick-witted" or "adroit" to *clever* in the sense of "good-natured." In each of these cases, the English usage appears to be gradually gaining ground in America: "railway," "station," and "veranda" are now used almost as frequently as *railroad*, *dépôt*, and *piazza*; *clever* in the sense of "good-natured," though still common in some of our rural districts, would be understood by few persons under twenty-five who were brought up in New York or in Boston. In England, on the other hand, the use of "baggage" for *luggage*, and of "trunk" for *box*, is more common than it was ten years ago.

By the occasional introduction of words that are not in national use, a writer may give local color or dramatic truth to a narrative; but if he uses such words freely he runs the risk of being unintelligible. Even great authors — Burns and Scott, for instance, — are sometimes difficult to understand without the aid of a glossary.

Reputable Use. — A word is in reputable use if it is supported by the authority of the great body of speakers and writers of established reputation.

Many words that are not in reputable use in the senses given to them creep, nevertheless, into print. Some of these come from business circles: *e.g.* "In that merciful *ad valorem* scale hereafter every one's character will be weighed," "The *balance* of the day was given to talk," "Our pleasure in the play was *discounted* by our familiarity with the plot," "Billy was always pretty well

posted," "This *sizes up* the man." Some come from the pulpit: *e.g.* "It followed the *advent* of the American hog into France." Some come from the bar: *e.g.* "This accident *entailed* the loss of his dinner," "A *party* in a silk hat stood at the door." Some come from books on mathematics: *e.g.* "He has come home from the war *minus* an arm," "The future of the Philippine Islands seems to be an *unknown quantity*."

Some words that are not in reputable use for serious writing are excusable in familiar conversation: *e.g.* "greenhorn," "grouty," "gumption," "highfalutin," "hustler," "in tantrums," "out of kilter," "ramshackle," "rig" (for "vehicle"), "scallawag," "wheel" (for "bicycle"), "to wobble."

A word that was once colloquial merely — as "boycott," "buncombe," "shoddy," "mob" (condemned by Swift), "punch" (condemned by Dr. Johnson) — may in time get from conversational and epistolary into literary use. Thus "mob," a contraction of *mobile vulgus*, is found in family letters long before it appears in books. Sometimes, as was the case with "boycott" and "telegram," the new word is so much needed that it speedily makes its way into the language; used at first by a reputable writer under protest, then put within marks of quotation as being a word of doubtful value, it may finally become good English for all purposes.

Sometimes a word has two forms, one of which is in reputable use in one generation, the other in another. Thus, toward the end of the eighteenth century, "botanists still wrote *asparagus*, but according to Walker ["Pronouncing Dictionary," 1791], '*Sparrow-grass* is so general that *asparagus* has an air of stiffness and pedantry.' During the present century *asparagus* has returned into literary and polite use, leaving *sparrow-grass* to the illiterate; though 'grass' still occurs in cookery books."¹

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, where the history of the word is given in full.

Good Use. — A word that is in present, national, and reputable use is said to be in good use: it is good English for all purposes. The fact that a word is in a dictionary does not necessarily prove that it is in good use either in literature or in conversation. A dictionary must contain words that are not yet good English, and also words that have been, but are no longer, good English; it must include not only "all the 'Common Words' of literature and conversation," but also "such of the scientific, technical, slang, dialectal, and foreign words as are passing into common use, and approach the position or standing of 'common words.'"¹ A grammar may discuss questions as to which usage is unsettled, but its main business is to record and classify expressions that are in good use. When either a dictionary or a grammar assumes to determine not what is, but what should be, good English, it goes beyond its province.

Writers of established reputation may succeed, now and then, in calling back words from the grave; but even the greatest of them have failed in the attempt. Writers of established reputation may, by adopting provincial or vulgar words as their own, do much to make them good English; but great authors are slow to invent words themselves, or to use those which lack the stamp of authority. "The two most copious and fluent of our prose writers, Johnson and Macaulay, may be cited on this head," says a recent author; "for the first hardly ever coined a word; the second, never. They had not the temptation; their tenacious memories were ever ready with a supply of old and appropriate words, which were therefore the best, because their associations were established in them."² If there were words enough in the language to supply the needs

¹ A part of this sentence is quoted from the first paragraph of "General Explanations," at the beginning of the Oxford English Dictionary. The whole paragraph is an admirable statement of the scope of a dictionary, and is enriched by a diagram that serves — as many diagrams do not — to explain the writer's meaning.

² John Earle: English Prose.

of Johnson and Macaulay, there are surely enough for ordinary writers. For most of us, the only safe rule is to use no word that is not accepted as good English by the best judges.

To writers of our day, obsolete or obsolescent words are less tempting than new-fangled expressions. For one devotee of old English who insists on writing *admire* for "wonder," *agone* for "ago" or "gone," *conscience* for "conscientiousness," *holpen* for "helped," *inwit* for "conscience," *knoweth* for "knows," *prevent* for "anticipate," or on publishing a *foreword* instead of a "preface," there are hundreds of "ready writers" who try their hands at the manufacture of novelties. Those who know least of English as it is, are precisely those who are most ready to disfigure their sentences with English as it is not.

On the other hand, there are persons so fastidious that they taboo as "vulgar" some expressions that have long been in good use: *e.g.* "carcass," "folderol," "gim-crack," "harum-scarum," "higgledy-piggledy," "hob-nob," "hocus-pocus," "hoity-toity," "pell-mell," "pot-luck," "tittle-tattle," "to curry favor," "to swap." There are others so matter-of-fact that they frown upon familiar phrases which contain words that survive in those phrases only: *e.g.* "beck and call," "by dint of," "by hook or by crook," "cheek by jowl," "ever and anon," "hue and cry," "in dudgeon" or "in high dudgeon," "kith and kin," "to and fro," "to the top of his bent," "with might and main."

Others still, under the influence of the hard and fast rules laid down in some grammars, condemn certain expressions that are embedded in the foundations of the language, expressions which, far from being bad English, are the best English, for they are so thoroughly English that they are not easily translatable, word for word, into other languages. "Had rather" and "had better," for example, forms that have been in good use for more than four

centuries, are quite as good English to-day as "would rather" and "might better."¹ Other expressions that disturb some grammarians are the following: "as it were," "at sixes and sevens," "how do you do?" "in the thick of it," "the long and the short of it," "under the circumstances," "to scrape acquaintance," "to take to one's heels"; "as follows," as in the sentence "These are as follows"; "come and" or "try and," as in the sentences "Come and see me to-morrow," "Try and remember what I told you"; "I take it," as in the sentence "Your views on this point are, I take it, much the same as mine"; "to take a cue," as in the sentence "She took her cue from what her mother had said." Peculiar expressions like these — called *IDIOMS* — give life to a language.

A common idiom appears in a dialogue in "Punch," under a cut that represents two men and a woman in front of a mirror: —

He. "Nellie, just look at that man standing behind me. I don't think I ever saw any one so plain!"

She. "Hush, dear; you forget yourself!"

The difference between the literal and the idiomatic way of putting things is admirably brought out by Lewis Carroll: —

"Even Stigand, the patriotic archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable —"

"Found *what*?" said the Duck.

"Found *it*," the Mouse replied rather crossly: "of course you know what 'it' means."

"I know what 'it' means well enough, when *I* find a thing," said the Duck: "it's generally a frog or a worm. The question is, what did the archbishop find?"²

¹ In the Oxford English Dictionary will be found examples of "were better" with a dative pronoun, dating from 971 to 1465; of "were better" with a nominative pronoun, dating from 1370 to 1601; of "had better," dating from 1537, or possibly from 1435, to 1875.

² Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

"I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure!" the Queen said. "Two-pence a week, and jam every other day."

Alice couldn't help laughing, as she said, "I don't want you to hire me — and I don't care for jam."

"It's very good jam," said the Queen.

"Well, I don't want any *to-day*, at any rate."

"You couldn't have it if you *did* want it," the Queen said. "The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday — but never jam to-day."

"It *must* come sometimes to 'jam to-day,'" Alice objected.

"No, it can't," said the Queen. "It's jam every *other* day: to-day isn't any *other* day, you know."

"I don't understand you," said Alice. "It's dreadfully confusing!"¹

Alice turned round, ready to find fault with anybody. "Where's the servant whose business it is to answer the door?" she began angrily.

"Which door?" said the Frog.

Alice almost stamped with irritation at the slow drawl in which he spoke. "*This* door, of course!"

The Frog looked at the door with his large dull eyes for a minute: then he went nearer and rubbed it with his thumb, as if he were trying whether the paint would come off; then he looked at Alice.

"To answer the door?" he said. "What's it been asking of?" He was so hoarse that Alice could scarcely hear him.

"I don't know what you mean," she said.

"I speaks English, doesn't I?" the Frog went on. "Or are you deaf? What did it ask you?"

"Nothing!" Alice said impatiently. "I've been knocking at it!"¹

The idiomatic phrases that are made fun of in these passages — "forget yourself," "found it advisable," "every other day," "answer the door" — are so familiar to us that we do not often think of the meanings they might suggest to a foreigner who read them word by word.

Choose expressions that are in good use.²

¹ Through the Looking-Glass and what Alice found there.

² For a full discussion of Good Use, see A. S. Hill's "Principles of Rhetoric" (revised edition), chapter i.

EXERCISE I

What expressions in the following passages would be out of place in everyday prose? What expressions should you use instead of them? —

1. Spake full well, in language quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine. — LONGFELLOW.
2. Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow! — WORDSWORTH.
3. Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat. — TENNYSON.
4. Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me. — MOORE.
5. With feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns. — MILTON.
6. There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet. — MOORE.
7. Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched
crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be
just. — LOWELL.
8. Thou wear a lion's hide! doff it for shame. — SHAKSPERE.¹
9. He spoke, and the Gods arm'd; and Odin donn'd
His dazzling corselet and his helm of gold. — MATTHEW ARNOLD.

¹ King John, iii. 1.

10. Enow there are on earth to take in charge
Their wives, their children, and their virgin loves,
Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear.— WORDSWORTH.
11. Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken. — KEATS.
12. Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade. — TENNYSON.

EXERCISE II

Discuss each of the following passages from the point of view of national use:¹—

1. "And so you see, Guinea," he concluded, "in order to keep a weather-helm in company, you are never to throw all aback, and go stern foremost out of a dispute, as you have this day seen fit to do. According to my l'arning, that Master Nightingale is better in a bar-room than in a squall; and if you had just-luffed-up on his quarter, when you saw me laying myself athwart his hawse in the argument, we should have given him a regular jam in the discourse, and then the fellow would have been shamed in the eyes of the bystanders." — COOPER.

2. Salem kicked off and Dummer sailed up the field to Salem's forty yard line, and there very obligingly gave Salem the ball. Salem then carried it back to the centre, where Dummer repeatedly piled up Salem's defence, and took the ball. In this pile Hanlon hurt his leg, which he had sprained in practice. Holman was put in his place. Dummer worked Salem's centre and pushed the ball down the field to the twenty-five yard line, where they lost it on downs. After two losing rushes by Salem, Wade got round Merriam's end and ran fifty yards before he was tackled. Myers overtook his man and by a beautiful tackle saved a touchdown. Mulligan bucked centre for no gain. Holman was tackled by Wilder for a loss of five yards. Wade tried tackle, but failed to gain more than three yards. The ball went to Dummer on downs. — THE DUMMER NEWS.

¹ Teachers are recommended to see that these passages are read and understood at this point; but they may find it advisable to postpone the discussion of them by younger pupils till Part I has been finished. Each teacher is the best judge of what his classes can do.

3. Brer Fox, he put out ter whar his fambly wuz, but Brer Rabbit, he slip 'roun', he did, en call on ole Miss Goose. Ole Miss Goose she wuz down at de spring, washin', en b'ilin', en battlin' cloze; but Brer Rabbit he march up en ax her howdy, en den she tuck'n ax Brer Rabbit howdy.

"I'd shake han's 'long wid you, Brer Rabbit," sez she, "but dey er all full er suds," sez she.

"No marter 'bout dat, Miss Goose," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "so long ez yo' will's good," sezee.

"A goose with hands, Uncle Remus!" the little boy exclaimed.

"How you know goose aint got han's?" Uncle Remus inquired, with a frown. "Is you been sleepin' longer ole man Know-All? Little mo' en you'll up'n stan' me down dat snakes ain't got no foots, and yit you take en lay a snake down yer 'fo' de fier, en his foots 'll come out right 'fo' yo' eyes."—JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

EXERCISE III

Which word in each pair of words is to be preferred by an American?—

"Baggage" or "luggage," "box" or "trunk," "corn" or "maize," "lift" or "elevator," "mucilage" or "gum," "rare" or "underdone" (beef), "reel" or "spool," "sidewalk" or "footway."

Which expression in each pair is to be preferred by any English-speaking person?—

"Al fresco" or "outdoor," "bas-bleu" or "blue-stocking," "bête noire" or "bugbear," "dépôt" or "station," "élan" or "impetuousness," "mal de mer" or "seasickness," "slaughter-house" or "abattoir," "sunstroke" or "coup de soleil."

EXERCISE IV

Discuss the propriety of each italicized word; bear in mind the time at which the passage was written or in which the scene is laid:—

1.

Let none *admire*

That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best

Deserve the precious bane.—MILTON.

2. Mrs. Chick *admires* that Edith should be, by nature, such a perfect Dombey. — DICKENS.¹

3. Her virtue, and the *conscience* of her worth,

Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turn'd. — MILTON.

4. The writer is absolutely without *conscience* of the truth. — ENGLISH NEWSPAPER (1896).

5. Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete
As *erst* with airy self-conceit. — COWPER.¹

6. The enigmas which of *erst* puzzled the brains of Socrates and Plato and Seneca. — THE CATHOLIC WORLD (1884).²

7. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be *holden* of it. — ACTS ii. 24.³

8. Very-pleasant and instructive meetings have been *holden* on Saturday evening. — AMERICAN NEWSPAPER (1897).

9. For hundreds of years, but no man *knoweth* just how many, they had lain untouched. — AMERICAN NEWSPAPER (1898).

10. The heart *knoweth* his own bitterness. — PROVERBS xiv. 10.

11. *Whilome* thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid. — TENNYSON.

12. The fickle queen caused her *whilom* favorite to be beheaded. — W. S. GREGG (1886).²

EXERCISE V

Show what principle of good use is violated by each italicized expression; substitute for each an equivalent expression that is in good use in serious writing: —

1. At the mid-year examination I *flunked* in mathematics.

2. I like the little man, he's so *sandy*.

3. They found him smoking his afternoon pipe on the *stoop*.

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

² Quoted in the Century Dictionary.

³ In this book, all citations from the Bible are from the King James version.

4. When Kent glanced at the examination paper, he thought he was going to have a *snap*.

5. If you are going to catch the train, you'll have to *hustle*.

6. I am *right* glad that he's so out of hope.

7. She apparently had not noticed his *advent*.

8. If President Roosevelt reads all that is written about him, he will not know *where he is at*.

9. It didn't take long to *size him up*.

10. Mr. Crane requested those persons who *calculated* to join the singing-school to come forward.

11. His speech was a *corker*.

12. "It's all *fixed up*," he said; "I've *cinched* the wharf."

13. The *small fry* are all in bed.

14. A two-horse *barge* containing twenty-three guests plunged down an embankment.

15. You'll be caught if you don't *watch out*.

CHAPTER II

PUNCTUATION

PUNCTUATION, which is sometimes spoken of as if it were an abstruse science or a fine art, is in point of fact a very simple affair. At bottom, it rests on a general understanding among writers, printers, and readers that certain marks shall serve certain purposes. These marks, whatever their origin, have no occult significance; like the letters of the alphabet, they are useful, not because they have any virtue in themselves, but because they are convenient means to an end, the end of making the author's meaning clear to the reader. When put in the proper places, — the places prescribed by good sense and good taste, — they help to show the relation between one word or group of words and another, and thus to bring out the meaning.

With this simple principle in mind, a young writer of ordinary intelligence can, in a few hours, learn as much as he needs to know in order to punctuate his compositions properly, provided always that his aim in writing is to express what he has to say in clear, simple, and straightforward English. With this principle in mind, he will not, by omitting a stop from the place in which it belongs, bring words together that are disconnected in thought, nor will he, by inserting an unnecessary stop, separate words that should be closely connected. When he has once learned the principal uses of the several marks of punctuation, he will put stops where they belong, without paying much more attention to what he is doing than when he crosses his "t's" and dots his "i's": he will have formed a habit of doing correctly what he has done many times.

Now and then, to be sure, he may hesitate in the choice between one point and another ; but he will meet with few difficulties that he cannot easily overcome.

A careless writer omits stops that are needed to make his meaning plain ; an inexperienced writer, oppressed with the necessity of putting in points enough, uses too many. Of the two classes of faults, the latter is the more dangerous ; for it is easier to supply omissions than to remove obstructions. Nowadays, "*open punctuation*, characterized by the avoidance of all pointing not clearly required by the construction," is preferred to "*close punctuation*, characterized especially by the use of many commas."¹

The marks of punctuation in their principal uses are as follows :—

Period	[.]	To mark the end of a sentence or of an abbreviated word.
Comma	[,]	} To mark breaks in a sentence.
Semicolon	;	
Colon	:	
Dash	—	
Marks of Parenthesis	()	
Brackets	[]	} To indicate an exclamation.
Exclamation-point	!	
Interrogation-point	?	
Quotation-marks	“ ” or ‘ ’	
Apostrophe	’	
Hyphen	-	To indicate the possessive case, or to mark an elision.
	-	To unite the parts of a compound word, or to mark a break in a word at the end of a line.

A simple way to give a general idea of the uses of the several marks of punctuation in everyday writing is to show them in practice. Let us take, for this purpose, some passages from a paper supposed to have been read at a meeting of a boys' club in Boston.

¹The Century Dictionary, under "Punctuation."

OUR PICNIC AT
WALDEN

*A paper read to the
Patrick Henry Club*

BY PERCY JONES

- (1 *a*) Last Saturday we had a picnic at Walden Pond. (1 *b*) What a delightful afternoon it was! (1 *c*) Shall I tell you all about it?

In the title of this paper, in conformity with the practice adopted in recent publications, no marks of punctuation are used. The omission (with some exceptions not necessary to note here) of all stops from title-pages, and also from superscriptions of letters and from inscriptions on monuments, rests on the theory that the meaning is plain without any punctuation, and the page more agreeable to the eye.

In (1 *a*) the period [.] marks the end of the sentence. The most important business of the period is to mark the end of a declarative, or assertive, sentence; but this stop also serves to mark an abbreviation, as in "Ill." (Illinois), "U. S. A." (United States of America), "O. W. (Oliver Wendell) Holmes," "A. B." (*artium baccalaureus*, bachelor of arts), "*i.e.*" (*id est*, that is).

In (1 *b*) the exclamation-point [!] indicates that the sentence after which it stands is ejaculatory. The exclamation-point is also commonly, but not always, used after an interjection, as "alas!" "ah!" "oh!"

In (1 *c*) the interrogation-point [?] indicates that the sentence after which it stands asks a question.

- (2 *a*) John James, Charles Williams, and Helen Pride, a girl from Beacon Hill, went with us from Boston. (2 *b*) We got to Concord just after ten, found our friends waiting for us at the station, and at once started with them for the pond. (2 *c*) Soon we

In (2 *a*) the first comma [,] serves to separate the names of two persons; it would, of course, have been unnecessary if the two names had been connected by "and." The second comma indicates that "Charles Williams" is no more closely connected with "Helen Pride" than with "John James." In such a sentence, the comma before "and" is sometimes omitted; but it is habitually used by careful authors. When, however, the two expressions connected by "and" are related to each other more closely than to the rest of the series, — as in "John James,

were in the woods, and in a few minutes we caught sight of the pond. (2*d*) Those of us who knew our Thoreau hurried forward, of course, to get a glimpse of the hut in which our author played hermit so long. No hut, however, was to be seen, as we might have known had we lived in Concord. (2*e*) So, at least, said the Concord girls, who were familiar with Walden. (2*f*) In the woods that encircle the pond, they had often looked for some trace of the hut, but had never found any.

Charles Williams, Helen Pride and her brother," — no comma is used before "and." The third and fourth commas in (2*a*) enclose a phrase that is in apposition with "Helen Pride."

In (2*b*) the commas separate phrases of the same kind, as in (2*a*) they separate words of the same kind.

In (2*c*) the comma before "and" serves to separate two independent clauses. A comma is also often used between two dependent clauses, or between a dependent clause and the clause on which it depends.

In (2*d*) the commas enclosing "of course" and "however," and that setting off the clause beginning with "as," indicate that these expressions are parenthetical — that is, that the omission of them would not affect the structure of the sentence.

In (2*e*) the comma before "who" shows the meaning to be that all the Concord girls present said "so"; in the absence of the comma, the meaning would be that only those Concord girls who were familiar with Walden said "so." With a comma, a relative clause adds something to the meaning of the antecedent; without a comma, it restricts or defines the meaning of the antecedent. Examples of the restrictive relative appear in the first sentence of (2*d*), and in (2*f*).

In (2*f*) the comma indicates that the phrase "In the woods," etc., stands before rather than after "looked," the word with which it is logically connected. A phrase or a clause that is not in its natural position is usually, but not always, set off by a comma; each case has to be decided by considerations of clearness.

(3 *a*) For the next hour or two, one boy continued to moon about Thoreau; but most of us engaged in more practical business.

(3 *b*) Some hunted for rare plants or for blackberries; some went out on the water and tried for perch; some gathered wood for a fire; some unpacked the baskets that we had brought with us; some set the table; some cooked what there was to cook.

(4 *a*) Our dinner, like most meals in the open air, differed from dinners indoors in three respects: in the first place, it was eaten with ravenous appetites, the best sauce in the world; in the second place, the quality of the food didn't matter to us; in the third place, our talk was free and easy, and made up in laughter for what it lacked in wit. (4 *b*) So free and easy were we at

In (3 *a*) the semicolon [;], like the comma in (2 *c*), serves to separate two independent clauses. In a sentence no longer than (3 *a*), some writers would use a comma in preference to a semicolon. On this point no positive rule can be laid down; but a semicolon is usually preferable if either clause is broken by one or more commas, or if the two clauses are not closely connected in thought.

In (3 *b*) periods might have been used instead of semicolons; but semicolons (or commas) are preferable, for they serve to make one sentence out of six independent clauses. Each of the six tells us what some of the company were doing; the six together tell us that everybody was busy in one way or another.

In (4 *a*) and (4 *b*) the colons [:] indicate that the general phrases "in three respects" and "a number of visitors" are to be followed by the particulars summed up in those phrases. In such cases, the colon may be regarded as equivalent to the sign of equality [=] in mathematics. The colon may also be used between two members of a sentence, if either member is composed of clauses that are separated by semicolons: *e.g.* "Early reformations are amicable arrangements with a friend in power; late reformations are terms imposed upon a conquered enemy: early reformations are made in cold blood; late reformations are made under a state of inflammation."

table that we had a number of visitors: a pair of bobolinks, who perched on a branch overhead; a squirrel, who made off with a nut that had dropped out of the bag; and more mosquitoes and caterpillars than we had time to count.

(5a) I almost forgot to mention that Helen Pride—the girl from Beacon Hill, you remember,—and Moses Snow, the son of a Concord farmer, struck up a great friendship in the course of the morning, and that, when the time came to start for home, they could not be found. (5b) At last some one spied, on the opposite side of the pond, what seemed to be a boat—a boat with two in it. (5c) Could the two, we wondered, possibly be Helen and—

(6a) “Suppose I read while we wait,” broke in a Concord boy, as he pulled

In (5a) the dashes [—] indicate, more distinctly than commas would, that the words which they enclose are parenthetical. Were commas substituted for dashes, a hasty reader might have to read the sentence twice before he could be sure of the meaning. When there are several commas in the sentence, and especially when, as in this case, the parenthetical passage is itself broken by commas, dashes are preferred to commas.

In (5b) the dash serves to give emphasis to the repetition of “boat.”

In (5c) the dash indicates an interruption. Whenever a sentence, or any other form of expression, is abruptly broken off, whether by an interruption or otherwise, a dash makes the break immediately clear.

In (6a) the quotation-marks [“ ”] before “suppose” and after “wait,” and those before “Thoreau’s” and after “elm-tree,” indicate that the words which they enclose are

"Walden" out of his pocket. "Thoreau's writings are always restful, and especially here, where he was on such good terms with nature. Here he was 'Pan come again,' as Emerson said. 'I love Henry,' said another of his friends, 'but I cannot like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree.'"

(7 a) So we listened, or pretended to listen, till the boat ("the lovers' boat," as we called it) came within hail.

(8 a) [Here follow several extracts from Thoreau's "Walden."]

(9 a) About five o'clock the laggards got to shore. (9 b) Shortly after their arrival we started homeward, tired enough no doubt, but thoroughly satisfied with our day's

the exact words of the speaker; the quotation-marks before and after "Walden" indicate that this word is the title of a book. Titles of books, unless they are italicized, usually require marks of quotation. When a quotation occurs within a quotation, -- as 'Pan come again,' 'I love Henry,' -- single quotation-marks [''] are used, unless single marks are employed for the principal quotation and double marks for the subordinate one, as is the practice in some British publications. When a subordinate quotation ends at the same place as the principal one, it is of course necessary to use both marks [']"], as is done at the end of (6 a).

In (7 a) the marks of parenthesis [()] indicate, somewhat more distinctly than dashes would, that the words which they enclose are parenthetical. Marks of parenthesis are, however, now often preferred to dashes because they look better.

In (8 a) brackets [[]] are used to enclose words that are not in the original text but that are added by the editor. Brackets should never take the place of marks of parenthesis; so used, they mislead the reader.

In (9 a) the apostrophe ['] in "o'clock" indicates an omission: "o'" stands for "of the." In (9 b) the apostrophes in "day's" and "Thoreau's" indicate the possessive case. Another use of the apostrophe is to mark the plural of a letter, of a figure, or of a word that is treated as a word without regard to its meaning: e.g. "Count the 'a's,' the '3's,' and the 'of's' in this book."

outing. Thoreau's Walden we had not seen, but the Walden we had seen was worth while.

In (9*b*) there is, it will be noticed, no comma before "no doubt," although these words, being parenthetical, would usually be set off by commas.¹ The reason for departing from the ordinary practice is that the presence of a comma before "no doubt" might lead the reader to suppose that the phrase belongs with "started homeward," whereas the absence of the comma shows unmistakably that "no doubt" goes with "tired enough." In such a case, the rules of punctuation may be set aside to advantage.

(10*a*) After listening to the paper from which the foregoing extracts are taken, the Patrick Henry Club passed the following resolutions:—

In (10*a*) the colon followed by a dash [:—] indicates that a quotation is to follow in another paragraph. Had the quotation been in the same paragraph, a colon [:] would have been enough. Some writers use colons alone in both cases.

Voted. That the thanks of the Patrick Henry Club be presented to Mr. Percy Jones for his entertaining and instructive paper.

Voted. That ten copies of the paper be printed at the expense of the author.

(11*a*) The face of Percy Jones while he listened to these resolutions was a study; but he said nothing, and the resolutions were carried. Then, with

In (11*a*) the hyphens in "cat-calls" and "boy-like" are used to join the parts of compound words. The hyphen also serves to divide a word at the end of a line, as in "carried" and "outbursts."

¹ See page 26.

cheers, cat-calls, and other boy-like outbursts of animal spirits, the meeting adjourned.

(12 *a*) A few days later, two letters enclosing copies of the paper were written. One was addressed to

Mr. Francis Brown
13 East 28th Street
Trenton
N. J.

(12 *b*) This letter was as follows:—

30 Washington Street,
Cambridge, Mass.,
Feb. 3, 1901.

(12 *c*)

MY DEAR FRANCIS,

With this letter I send you a copy of the paper which I read the other night before the Patrick Henry Club, and also a copy of the resolutions passed by the club. In these, you will notice, I am required, as a compliment (!) to myself, to print at my own expense ten copies of the paper.

Your sincere friend,

PERCY JONES.

In (12 *a*) the omission from the superscription of all punctuation except the periods after abbreviated words is in accordance with the best modern usage. The same reasons that justify the omission of marks of punctuation from the title of the essay hold good here.

In (12 *b*) the commas indicate, in each case, an ellipsis. Similar cases of ellipsis occur in superscriptions; but in such instances, as we have seen, custom dispenses with commas. When the local address and the date are written on one line, as they often are, commas are especially needed as a means of separating the several details from one another. The period after "1901" in (12 *b*) is used to separate the date from the body of the letter.

In (12 *c*) the comma after "Francis" serves to separate the phrase "My dear Francis" from the body of the letter, that after "friend" to separate the writer's expression of regard from his name. The exclamation-point in parenthesis [(!)] calls attention to the word "compliment," and indicates that this word is to be taken in a humorous, or Pickwickian, sense. It may be regarded as the written equivalent of a wink or a shrug.

(13 *a*) The other letter was addressed to John J. Percival, Esq.

Colonial School

Bolton

Massachusetts

(13 *b*) This letter ran as follows : —

8 Jefferson Court,

Cambridge,

Massachusetts,

February 3, 1901.

MY DEAR SIR :

The Patrick Henry Club directs me to send to you, as one of its former presidents, a copy of a paper which was read at the last meeting of the club. I take great pleasure in enclosing it, and beg you to believe me, sir,

Faithfully yours,

T. TUCKER,

Secretary.

John J. Percival, Esq.

In (13 *a*) the comma in the first line of the address is used to separate Mr. Percival's name from his title.

In (13 *b*) the colon after "Sir" separates the phrase "My dear Sir" from the body of the letter in a more formal manner than a comma would do. The "sir" at the end of the letter is set off by commas because it is a vocative expression.

Summary.—The **period** is used to mark the end of a declarative sentence or of an abbreviated word.

The **comma** is used to separate two words or phrases that are of the same kind or that are in apposition with each other, to separate two clauses, to set off a parenthetical expression from the rest of the sentence, to separate an explanatory relative clause from its antecedent, and to show that a phrase or a clause is not in its natural position.

The **semicolon** is used to separate two independent clauses, especially when either of them is broken by commas.

The **colon** is used between a general phrase and the particulars which the phrase sums up, and between two members of a sentence if either member is composed of clauses separated by semicolons.

Dashes (one or two) are used to set off a parenthetical expression, especially if such an expression is broken by one or more commas, and to emphasize repetitions and interruptions.

Marks of parenthesis are used to set off a parenthetical expression more decidedly than commas or dashes would set it off.

Brackets are used to enclose words that are not in the original text but that are added or substituted by the transcriber or the editor.

The **exclamation-point** is used to indicate an ejaculatory expression, and to call attention to a word.

The **interrogation-point** is used to indicate a question.

Quotation-marks are used to indicate a direct quotation, and to mark the name of a book or a newspaper that is not distinguished in any other way.

The **apostrophe** is used to indicate the omission of a letter or letters, to denote the possessive case, and to form the plural of a letter, of a figure, or of a word that is treated merely as a word.

The **hyphen** is used to join the constituent parts of a compound word, and to divide a word at the end of a line.

EXERCISE VI

Explain the several marks of punctuation in the comments on "Our Picnic at Walden."

EXERCISE VII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested:—

1. The { prisoner, said the witness, was a convicted thief.¹
prisoner said the witness was
 2. { Fruit, seeds, and berries are free of duty.¹
{ Fruit seeds and
 3. Now how are the Indians provided for?
Now,
 4. The { Chinese, who is in every respect fit for citizenship,
{ Chinese who is in every respect fit for citizenship
- is excluded; but the { Italian, who is absolutely unfit, is admitted.
{ Italian who is absolutely unfit

¹ This example is taken from Theodore Low De Vinne's "Practice of Typography."

5. Second, That no sale of spirituous or intoxicating liquor shall be made between the hours of twelve at night and six in the morning; nor during the Lord's day, except that, if the licensee is morning, nor also licensed as an innholder, he may supply such liquor to guests who have resorted to his house for food or lodging.¹

EXERCISE VIII

Make the meaning of each sentence clear by such changes or additions in punctuation as are necessary : —

1. He has suffered less, but he has suffered before trial ; and not after it.

2. Since paternal authority was without appeal, in those days, I sadly withdrew.

3. They had been destined, before heaven and earth were created to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away.

4. The happiness of the dead however is affected by none of these considerations.²

5. What do you think I'll shave you for nothing.²

6. To the Father of lights in whom there is no darkness are we indebted for all the blessings we enjoy.²

7. The policy of the Dutch, who cut down most of the precious trees in the Spice Islands, in order to raise the value of what remained, was a policy which poets would do well to imitate.

8. He had formed parties to visit the grounds, at least, twice every summer for the last ten years.

9. A man came slowly forth from the stately house to sun himself in the comfortable shelter of the high garden walls. Looking the while, with the pensive resignation of old age, at the goodly, wide-spreading prospect.

¹ This example comes from the "semicolon law," as printed in the Massachusetts Revised Statutes, Vol. 177, p. 222. By the accidental substitution of a semicolon for a comma, the meaning was changed in a way that led to litigation.

² This example is taken from John Wilson's "Treatise on English Punctuation."

CHAPTER III

LETTER-WRITING

EVERY one who can handle a pen should learn as early as possible the best usage in letter-writing, and should by constant practice acquire facility in the use of his knowledge. Letters connect themselves so closely with everyday life that they may well serve as first steps in composition.

Familiar Letters. — The letters that most nearly resemble conversation are those which pass between relatives or friends. They should be, and at their best always are, talks with the pen.

The style of a familiar letter is, to a great extent, determined by the individuality of the writer and the degree of sympathy between him and the person written to. It may range from the "little language" of Swift's journal to Stella, or the whimsical turns of expression in Stevenson's playful notes, to the careful diction of Cowper's or of Matthew Arnold's serious letters; but it should never be slovenly or illiterate on the one hand, or pompous and bookish on the other. In general, a familiar letter "should be possible but from its sender to its recipient." "I find your letters always *you*," writes Mrs. Oliphant to her nephew, "which is the very best thing letters can be."

To exemplify the numerous varieties of familiar letters is impossible here. All that can be done is to print a few short notes written in accordance with the best usage in point of form. One was sent by Lowell, with some verses, to Miss Evelyn Smalley on her birthday: —

31 LOWNDES SQUARE, S.W.,

29th April, 1884.

DEAR ENIE,

I wish you many happy returns, and that you may have some visible reason to remember me when I am no longer here to wish, I send you the verses I promised. If they don't say what I meant they should say (and verses seldom do), they will at least serve as a record of the love I bore you.

Affectionately yours,

J. R. L.¹

Here are two letters from Tennyson : —

MY DEAR BROWNING,

ALDWORTH, August, 1889.

I thank you with my whole heart and being for your noble and affectionate letter, and with my whole heart and being I return your friendship. To be loved and appreciated by so great and powerful a nature as yours will be a solace to me, and lighten my dark hours during the short time of life that is left to me.

Ever yours,

TENNYSON.

DEAR FRIEND,

Our affectionate sympathies are with you. That is all that can be said at present, and these "words" are nothing to you at present, but for his sake accept them.

A. TENNYSON.²

Here are three of Steele's letters to his wife : —

DEAR PRUE,

Oct. 8, 1708.

This brings you a quarter of a pound of bohea, and as much of green tea, both which I hope you will find good. To-morrow morning your favourite, Mr. Addison, and I, shall set out for Hampton court; he to meet some great men there, I to see you, who am but what you make me.

Yours, with the utmost fondness,

RICH. STEELE.

¹ Published in the "Century," November, 1899. In the magazine, the address "Dear Enie" is followed by a colon, and is printed, to save space, on a line with the first words of the sentence that follows, — in conformity, no doubt, with the practice of the editor; in manuscript, the letter was probably spaced and punctuated as it is printed above.

² Both these letters are printed exactly as they appear in the memoir of Tennyson written by his son. The second letter was written to George Eliot soon after the death of George Lewes.

DEAR PRUE,

March 11, 1708-9.

I inclose five guineas, but cannot come home to dinner. Dear little woman, take care of thyself, and eat and drink chearfully.

RICH. STEELE.

DEAR PRUE,

March 28, 1713.

I will do every thing you desire your own way.

Yours ever,

RICH. STEELE.

A good example of an informal invitation is the following : —

MY DEAR MR. DALE,

Will you not come in next Monday at half-past one o'clock and take your lunch with us? It will give Mr. Mellow and me great pleasure to welcome you here then.

With kind regards to Mrs. Dale, whom I shall hope to see as the weather becomes better, -

Cordially yours,

ROSE G. MELLOW.

If half-past one o'clock will interfere with your lecture hour, I shall be very glad to make it one o'clock.

125 Adams Street, March seventeenth.

The beginning and the ending of even a familiar letter should conform to rules fixed by the usage of polite society, rules rigid in some cases and flexible in others. Lowell, in his letter quoted on the preceding page, gives at the beginning his town address together with the date; but he might have put both at the end: either position is proper. Sometimes, even when the local address is stamped at the head of the note-paper, the date is put by itself at the end. When a letter covers several pages, it is convenient for the reader to know the date at the outset; when a note is so short that the details may be taken in at a glance, the local address and the date may be either at the top or at the bottom of the page.

The opening of a familiar letter may, with certain

restrictions, be left to individual taste. The safest, because the simplest, way to begin is to put after the adjective "Dear" the name which the writer would naturally use in conversation with the person addressed. The form "My dear Mary" is perhaps slightly more formal than "Dear Mary," unless "My" is used as a term of affection.

The expression of regard or of courtesy at the end of a familiar letter may be left to individual preference within the limits of conventional rules. The most common way of closing an informal letter to a mere acquaintance or to a stranger is to write "Yours truly" or "Very truly yours," forms that usually mean less than "Yours sincerely." Either "Sincerely yours" or "Yours sincerely" is proper, either "Affectionately yours" or "Yours affectionately." As a rule, neither "yours" nor the accompanying adverb should be omitted or abbreviated; but in a letter to a very intimate friend omissions and abbreviations are allowable, for in our day affection makes short work with conventional rules. Though "friend" is now unusual at the beginning of a letter, "Your sincere friend" at the end is a natural and an acceptable expression of regard. The stately language which politeness formerly required at the end of even an informal letter is nowadays reserved for ceremonious communications. Fifty years ago a gentleman writing quite informally to a lady would have subscribed himself "Your obedient servant," or have used some expression even more elaborate and courtly; to-day such phrases rarely occur except in official or in very formal letters. In this matter, as in others, the modern tendency is toward simplicity.

Formal Letters in the First Person.—When we speak of a "formal" letter, we mean a letter in which particular attention to form is required; but there are different degrees of formality in expression, as there are of formality in behavior.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, September 12, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR, —

The President directs me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter transmitted by Mr. Sumner, and to express to you his sincere thanks for the suggestions it contains, as well as for the kind terms in which you have spoken of himself. I have the honor to be very truly,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN HAY,

Private Secretary.

MESSRS. SEEK & HYDE,

18 Broilston St., Boston, Mass.

15 CONGRESS ST., Nov. 3, 1899.

GENTLEMEN:

It was agreed between Mr. Dewey and me that I should send you a copy of the deposition of John M. Bennett, taken for use in *Simonds vs. Boston Elevated Railroad*, and I accordingly enclose such copy herewith.

Yours very truly,

M. S. DALE.

MY DEAR MRS. JONES:

THE ELMS, LONGWOOD.

Will you and Mr. Jones give us the pleasure of your company at dinner on Thursday evening, January the twenty-fourth, at eight o'clock? Hoping that you have no previous engagement, I am

Sincerely yours,

January sixth, 1902.

JANE BROWN.

3 FRANKLIN TERRACE, Seventh January, 1902.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN:

It will give Mr. Jones and me much pleasure to dine with you on Thursday, January twenty-fourth, at eight o'clock. Thank you for so kindly thinking of us.

Yours very sincerely,

ELIZABETH JONES.

The foregoing examples are enough to show that the style of a formal letter in the first person, though it must be ceremonious, may depend upon the nature of the occasion and, to a certain extent, upon the temperament of the writer. The modern tendency, as has already been

said, is toward simplicity of language. In diplomatic correspondence much of the stately dignity of the traditional forms is retained, but in business communications the best usage favors shorter and more direct expressions. In formal letters of a social character, such as those of Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Brown quoted on the preceding page, a happy medium has been reached by the best usage. In any formal letter, the writer should avoid both an artificial elaborateness that may sound stilted, insincere, or servile, and a bald literalness that is inconsiderate or curt.

The opening of a formal letter is almost rigidly prescribed. The most formal, and that generally used in official or business correspondence, consists of one word, "Sir" or "Madam"; next in order of formality comes "My dear Sir" or "Dear Sir," "My dear Madam" or "Dear Madam." "Madam" is used in addressing an unmarried, as well as a married, woman. The usual plural forms are "Sirs," "Dear Sirs," or "Gentlemen," and "Ladies" or "Mesdames."¹ When any one of these forms is used, the name of the person written to may come either at the beginning or at the end of the letter, or (as a matter of convenience) at the bottom of the first page. When two or three gentlemen are addressed, the form "Messrs. Jones and Smith," or "Messrs. Jones, Smith, and Brown," is used;² when more than three are addressed, the form "Mr. Henry Jones and others" is preferable, for a list of names and titles would be cumbersome. In a letter of a social character, the name of the person addressed is placed after "Dear" or "My dear," as "My dear Mr. Jones," "My dear Miss Jones"; the full name and title may, but need not, be added at the end.

¹ "Mesdames" is objectionable because it is not English; on this ground it is avoided by many careful writers.

² It is unfortunate that we have no abbreviation for "Mesdames" corresponding to the familiar "Messrs." for "Messieurs." Instead of addressing several ladies together as "Mesdames Jones, Smith, and Brown," we may put "Mrs." before the name of each.

The endings of formal letters vary with occasion and with individual taste, ranging from the elaborate

I have the honor to be, sir,
Your obedient servant

of diplomatic correspondence, to the brief

Respectfully yours

of an official or a business communication ; from the punctilious

Believe me, my dear Mrs. Jones,
Faithfully yours

of a ceremonious letter, to the polite

Sincerely yours

of a social note.

A married woman should never put "Mrs." in her signature. If she is writing a business letter to a stranger, she should sign her own name, and put her husband's name, with "Mrs." before it, either underneath in parenthesis or at the other side of the page, as

Mrs. John Smith. [or] MARY SMITH.
(Mrs. John Smith.)

An unmarried woman, writing a letter of a similar nature, may properly subscribe herself

(MISS) SARAH TRIPSON.

Formal Letters in the Third Person. — The practice of writing letters in the third person is more common in England than in the United States ; but it is still kept up in this country in formal notes of invitation, acceptance, or refusal, in official communications, and in some business letters.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Brown
request the pleasure of
Mr. and Mrs. Jones's
company at dinner on Thursday
evening, January the twenty-fourth,
at eight o'clock.

THE ELMS.

3 FRANKLIN TERRACE.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jones
regret that a previous engagement
prevents them from accepting

Mr. and Mrs. Brown's
kind invitation to dinner
on Thursday, January twenty-fourth.

In the second example, the reason for not accepting the invitation is given,—"a previous engagement." When a reason is given, it should never be more explicit than this wholly conventional and wholly polite phrase. Since, however, there is nowadays no social necessity for explaining why an invitation is declined, the letter might properly have read,

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jones
regret that they are unable to accept
Mr. and Mrs. Brown's kind invitation, etc.

The phrase "kind invitation" recognizes in the best modern form the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Two generations ago the phrase would probably have been "polite invitation."

Professor Blank and
the Misses Blank
request the pleasure of
Mr. John Doe's
company at a small musicale
on Friday evening, February ninth,
at nine o'clock.
To meet the Bishop of Litchfield.

4 LINCOLN SQUARE.

R. s. v. p.

In this invitation, "*R. s. v. p.*" is the conventional form most frequently used to indicate that an answer is desired. These letters stand for the French phrase *Répondez s'il vous plaît*, "Reply if you please." An English equivalent is sometimes used, as "Please reply," or "Kindly answer."

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, PALL MALL, S. W.

Sir Francis Knollys has received the commands of the King to convey to the president and members of the Massachusetts State Board of Trade the expression of His Majesty's warm thanks for the board's resolutions of sympathy upon the death of Her Lamented Majesty, Queen Victoria.

8th February, 1901.

The President and Fellows of Harvard College have received "Life on the Mississippi," a gift to the Library of the University from Mr. A. M. Dale, for which they return grateful acknowledgment.

CAMBRIDGE, March 2, 1900.

Mrs. Hosmer will be greatly obliged to Madame Olga if she will send before one o'clock on Thursday the dress promised for that day.

Mrs. Hosmer has to take the afternoon train for New York on the day named.

6 JAMES STREET, February 3rd.

Will Mr. Fen kindly see how many editions of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" his library contains, and at his convenience send word to E. Banks, at Nantucket.

For notes like these, the formal style seems to be peculiarly appropriate.

EXERCISE IX

Write a familiar letter, with particular attention to the beginning, the ending, and the superscription, and to punctuation throughout.

Write a formal invitation to dinner, and replies to such an invitation — one accepting, one declining it.

Write a letter in answer to the following advertisement: "Boy wanted in a drug store. Give age, previous occupation, and references."

CHAPTER IV

NOUNS

THOSE who wish to write correctly should pay particular attention to nouns, pronouns, and verbs, the most important parts of speech.

Use and Place of the Apostrophe. — The apostrophe is a little character that is greatly abused.

I

Cubans are complaining.

I have two ideas of the treatment of Shylock.

In spite of our hero's services, the king begins to wish he were well rid of such a monster.

He thus won, not only a wrestling match, but a lady's heart.

II

Cuban's are complaining.

I have two *idea's* of the treatment of Shylock.

In spite of our *heros* services, the king begins to wish he were well rid of such a monster.

He thus won, not only a wrestling match, but a *ladies* heart.¹

[Throughout this book, the forms of expression given under I are better than those given under II: those under II are the original, those under I the corrected, forms. In each example in Part I, the fault lies in the italicized word or words.]

The apostrophe, as every one should know, is usually a sign of the possessive case.²

I

Many of Scott's more romantic novels are not nearly so true to life as Miss Austen's.

II

Many of Scott's more romantic novels are not nearly so true to life as Miss *Austens's*.

If the reference is to the author of "Pride and Prejudice," the apostrophe should come before the "s."

¹ The first of these faulty sentences was a headline above a dispatch from Havana published in a leading Boston newspaper; the others, like many more in this book, come from compositions written by candidates for admission to Harvard College.

² For other uses of the apostrophe, see page 29.

I

She had known everything about them, from the boys' bills and the girls' gloves to the heart and the disposition of each.

II

She had known everything about them, from the boys' bills and the *girl's* gloves to the heart and the disposition of each.

If more than one girl is meant, the apostrophe should come after the "s" in "girls'," as it does in "boys'."

I

We sell nothing but men's clothing.

Four sheeps' heads appeared above the wall.

II

We sell nothing but *mens'* clothing.

Four *sheep's* heads appeared above the wall.

Usually a plural that does not end in "s" (as "men," "women") forms its possessive case by adding "'s"; but when a plural has the same form as the singular (as "sheep," "swine"), it adds "s" for the possessive.

When an apostrophe is needed, put it in the right place.

Possessive of Nouns in "s."—The possessive case of a noun that ends in "s" is not always correctly formed.

I

The line is in Keats's "Endymion."

I shot Mrs. Briggs's cat.

Fate decreed that no horse-jockey should become the possessor of Godfrey Cass's mare.

II

The line is in *Keat's* "Endymion."

I shot Mrs. *Briggs'* cat.

Fate decreed that no horse-jockey should become the possessor of Godfrey *Cass'* mare.

The fault exemplified in the first sentence under II, gross as it is, occasionally occurs in college compositions; that exemplified in the other sentences is less objectionable but more common. According to the best present usage, proper names ending in "s" (or the sound of "s"), if but one syllable long, add "s" after the apostrophe, as "Burns's," "James's," "Miles's." So do names of two syllables when the sound of the additional "s" is not disagreeable to the ear, as "Dickens's," "Horace's,"

“Phillips’s.” Since, however, ears differ, no hard and fast rule can be laid down: “Hastings’s,” for example, has too many “s’s” for most ears, but perhaps not for all. The addition of an “s” to a name of three or more syllables — *e.g.* “Demosthenes,” “Hercules,” “Hinterlands” — would in almost every case give the word a disagreeable sound.

One way of avoiding the additional “s” is to employ the objective case with “of.” “The death of Lycidas,” for example, is better than “*Lycidas’s* death” or “*Lycidas’* death,” “an act of Congress” than “*Congress’s* act” or “*Congress’* act,” “the correspondence of the ‘Times’” than “the *Times’s* correspondence” or “the *Times’* correspondence.” Sometimes, however, the objective with “of” will not do: we should say, for example, not “The point *of the* ‘Times’ is well taken,” but “The point made by the ‘Times’ is well taken.” The “Times” itself cuts the knot by advertising “The Times History of the South African War”; so used, “Times” is practically an adjective, as is “King James” in the phrase “the King James translation of the Bible.”

In the formation of the possessive singular of a common noun in “s” (or the sound of “s”), as in that of a proper noun, regard is paid to euphony.¹ We say, for example, not “for *politeness’s* sake,” “for *goodness’s* sake,” “for *conscience’s* sake,” but “for politeness’ sake,” “for goodness’ sake,” “for conscience’ sake”; and most of us would probably say, neither “the *princess’s* presence” nor “the *princess’* presence,” but “the presence of the princess.”

In poetry, the question of adding an “s” is often decided by the metre; for the “s” after an apostrophe counts as a full syllable.

In forming the possessive singular of nouns ending in “s” or the sound of “s,” add an “s” after the apostrophe unless euphony forbids.

¹That which is agreeable to the ear; from a Greek word meaning the quality of having a good voice.

Possessive of “Anybody else.” — The possessive of “anybody else,” “nobody else,” “somebody else,” is not absolutely fixed.

I

I have received your cards, but
not anybody else's [*or but nobody*
else's].

II

I have received your cards, but
not *anybody's else*.

Some recognized authorities prefer *anybody's else* to “anybody else's.” Mr. Henry James, for example, writes, “What do you know about trouble — either poor Nanda's, or mine, or anybody's else?” Horace Walpole used the same form even with a noun following: *e.g.* “I wish I could send you anybody's else life to write.” At present, however, the weight of good usage inclines to “anybody else's.” The natural place for the possessive sign, moreover, seems to be at the end of the possessive expression, as it is in “the Duke of Kent's estate,” “the heir apparent's name,” “our brother-in-law's wishes.” On the other hand, everybody says “whose else,” not *who else's*.

EXERCISE X

Insert an apostrophe wherever one is needed; add an “s” after the apostrophe when one is needed: —

1. It was New Years eve.
2. They had passed within a stones throw of each other.
3. Burns home was not all that one might have wished it to be.
4. The ante-room was hung with deers horns and carpeted with tigers skins.
5. Read “The Pilgrims Progress” and Miltons “Paradise Lost.”
6. That is Dick Bates hat.
7. Our winter stock of ladies and gentlemens shoes is now ready.
8. He did it for conscience sake.
9. The reporters table was crowded this afternoon.
10. His was harsh penance on St. Agnes Eve :
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his souls reprieve.

EXERCISE XI

In place of each expression within quotation-marks, substitute a phrase in which one noun is in the possessive case : —

1. There was a party at "the house of Polly Davis" last Friday.
2. Xantippe was "the wife of Socrates."
3. It will soon be "the turn of somebody else."
4. "The most striking characteristic of Keats" was his sensitiveness to beauty.
5. I have read three of "the novels of Dickens," five of "those of Scott," two of "those of Jane Austen," and one of "those of George Eliot."

Two Possessives or One ? — When two nouns (or more than two) hold the possessive relation to a following noun, a distinction is made between those cases which denote joint possession and those which denote separate possession.

I	II
I like the tone of Norris and Mann's pianos.	I like the tone of <i>Norris's</i> and Mann's pianos.
Doe and Son's office is open.	<i>Doe's</i> and Son's office is open.

Each of these examples mentions the name of a firm. As such a name, composed though it may be of several words, denotes joint possession, it is practically one expression, and therefore takes but one possessive sign.

I	II
Dryden's and Rowe's manner [or Dryden's manner and Rowe's] are quite out of fashion.	<i>Dryden</i> and Rowe's manner are quite out of fashion.

In the sentence under II, the absence of the possessive sign after *Dryden* implies that Dryden and Rowe had the same manner; but since the writer's use of a plural verb implies that each had a manner of his own, the possessive sign is needed after "Dryden" as well as after "Rowe." We should not say, "I like *Goldsmith* and Hawthorne's style"; for Goldsmith and Hawthorne did not write in collaboration or in the same style.

I

Is that a redbreast's or an oriole's note?

II

Is that a *redbreast* or an oriole's note?

An absurd sentence like that under II comes sometimes, especially in conversation, from want of thought.

I

I bought these rolls at Wright the baker's [*or* Wright's, the baker's].

II

I bought these rolls at *Wright's the baker*.

In this example, "shop" is understood; and surely we should say, not "*Wright's the baker shop*," but either "Wright the baker's shop" or "Wright's, the baker's, shop." In the former case, "Wright the baker" may be regarded as a single expression requiring but one possessive sign; in the latter case, "the baker's" may be regarded as in apposition with "Wright's." In phrases like this, the best usage puts the possessive sign either with the second of the two nouns or with each of them. On grounds of euphony, the single possessive expression is usually preferable; thus, Mrs. Browning writes, "I send you my friend Mr. Horne's new epic and beg you to drop it at Mr. Eagles' feet."

I

They were visitors at the manor-house of Mr. Bingley [*or* at Mr. Bingley's manor-house].

II

They were visitors at the manor-house of Mr. *Bingley's*.

An unskilful writer sometimes uses both "of" and the possessive when either of the two would express his meaning. Here the meaning plainly is "at the manor-house of Mr. Bingley," or "at Mr. Bingley's manor-house." If the meaning were "at one of Mr. Bingley's manor-houses," the sentence might have read, in accordance with a peculiar but well-established idiom, "at a manor-house of Mr. Bingley's."

Use as many possessive signs as there are possessive expressions, and no more.

Possessive or "Of"? — Apart from the considerations of euphony already noticed,¹ the question whether to put a noun in the possessive case or to use the objective case with "of" is sometimes perplexing.

I

I had a full understanding of
[or I fully understood] the sig-
nificance of the fact.

II

I had a full understanding of
the *fact's* significance.

In the older language, the possessive (or genitive) case was sometimes used when it would not be proper now. In the King James translation of the Gospels, for example, we find *shoe's latchet*, in Richardson's "Clarissa Harlowe" *stair's foot*, in Thackeray's "Henry Esmond" (which imitates the style of the period of Queen Anne) *bed's foot*; but we do not find such expressions in good authors to-day. The tendency of the best modern usage is to employ the objective case with "of," rather than to put into the possessive case a noun that represents a thing without life.

Some short phrases — *e.g.* "a day's march," "a hair's breadth," "a night's lodging," "a week's wages," "a year's absence," "at arm's length," "at his journey's end," "at his tongue's end," "at my wit's end," "for pity's sake," "out of harm's way," "the law's delay," "the mind's eye," "your money's worth" — are so convenient that they have become standard English.

With pronouns still greater latitude is allowed. No one hesitates to write "by your leave," "in my absence," "in my behalf," "in his defence," "in their despite," "in his stead," "of her own accord," "on our account," "to their credit." *In our midst*, on the other hand, is avoided by so many careful writers, and condemned by so many critics, that it may never fight its way into the accepted language.

I

There is a report of the postpone-
ment of the Cuban expedition.

II

There is a report of the Cuban
expedition's postponement.

¹ See page 46.

The sentence under II exemplifies a construction that corresponds to the "objective genitive" of some other languages but that is rare in English prose. Shakspeare may say,

Shall Rome stand under one man's awe?¹

and modern poets may follow his example; but in everyday English we should write, "Shall Rome stand in awe of one man?"

As a rule, do not use the possessive case of a noun unless it indicates real possession.

EXERCISE XII

Tell the difference in meaning in each case between the expressions connected by "and":—

1. "Do you wear Burt and Reed's shoes?" and "Do you wear Burt's and Reed's shoes?"

2. "We use Spiers and Surenne's dictionary" and "We use Webster's and Worcester's dictionaries."

3. "I saw either a man or a woman's head" and "I saw either a man's or a woman's head."

4. "Sighing for Phillis or Chloe's pity" and "Sighing for Phillis's or Chloe's pity."

5. "This news of papa agitated me very much" and "This news of papa's agitated me very much."

6. "Mary has lost her brother's picture" and "Mary has lost the picture of her brother."

7. "Did you ever read a better story of Mr. Kipling's?" and "Did you ever read a better story of Mr. Kipling?"

EXERCISE XIII

Express relation between the words, or groups of words, in each of the following pairs either by the possessive case or by the objective with "of," as may seem best:—

Aristophanes, "Birds"; Plutarch, "Lives"; king of Great Britain, dominions; Sir Giles, servant; Charles the Second, reign; witness,

¹ Julius Cæsar, ii. 1.

testimony; Partridge, restaurant; eagles, talons; enemy, repulse; book, cover; princess, evening gowns; Major André, capture; gunpowder, invention; torrent, force; year, events; Essex, death; Adams, administration; six months, wages; world, government; Queen Louisa of Prussia, charity; Mr. Todd the baker, shop; Wendell Phillips, courage; goodness, sake; somebody else, ring; my friend Mary, children; Clark and Eaton, bill.

Case before a Gerund.¹—A writer sometimes finds it difficult to decide whether a noun that limits a gerund should, or should not, be in the possessive case.

I

The reason for Bassanio's wanting the money was that he was a suitor of a rich heiress.

The doctor insisted on the nurse's going out for fresh air.

II

The reason for *Bassanio* wanting the money was that he was a suitor of a rich heiress.

The doctor insisted upon the *nurse* going out for fresh air.

“Wanting” and “going” are gerunds—that is, verbal forms which are in construction partly verbs and partly nouns. As nouns they are limited by preceding nouns, which should, according to the rules of grammar, be in the possessive case. These rules, however, are often ignored.

I

I hope you do not imagine that there was any impropriety in the king and queen's walking together in the palace garden.

II

I hope you do not imagine that there was any impropriety in the *king and queen* walking together in the palace garden.

In the sentence under II, the absence of the possessive sign may imply that the impropriety is in the king and queen themselves, instead of in the fact of their walking together. The phrase “king and queen” is a single possessive expression, and consequently takes but one possessive sign.²

¹ Some grammars make a distinction between gerunds and verbal nouns; but in this book, for convenience, all nouns in “-ing” are called gerunds.

² See page 48.

I

The chances that peace will be reëstablished at an early date are vanishing.

II

The chances of *peace* being reëstablished at an early date are vanishing.

The possessive of "peace" is demanded by the construction of the sentence under II; but, since "the chances of peace's being" is objectionable from every point of view, a construction that does not require a possessive is preferable.

Before a gerund, put a limiting noun in the possessive case.

EXERCISE XIV

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the noun in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. Imagine, if you can, Marguerite (Marguerite's) studying Latin!
2. Brown (Brown's) being a manufacturer secured the election.
3. The man (man's) asking to be allowed to vote started a quarrel.
4. I had to laugh at John (John's) riding a bicycle.
5. Much depends on the teacher (teacher's) knowing the subject.
6. No one ever heard of that man (man's) running for office.
7. We were afraid of the men (men's) overhearing us.

EXERCISE XV

Correct errors in either the use or the omission of the possessive; give your reason for each correction: —

1. Mr. John Smith accepts Mr. Jone's kind invitation to dinner.
2. Mr. John Smith accepts Mr. Jones kind invitation to dinner.
3. Jealousy is regarded as the crime's motive.
4. I bought a dress at Lord's and Taylor's.
5. She stood at the bedstead's head, looking over it.
6. A dog and a cat's head cannot but be differently shaped.
7. Whose Greek grammar do you prefer — Goodwin or Hadley?
8. The visit ended in the doctor establishing himself in that village.
9. I consulted Worcester's dictionary and Webster.

10. I like Hawthorne better than Irving's style.
11. A reception was given to Cambridge's distinguished visitor.
12. The novel is one of Dickens.
13. From here you can see that lion over Scarlett's, the butcher.
14. Benjamin Lincoln commanded the Massachusetts militia that quelled Shays' Rebellion.
15. Lord Conrad sat in the great hall at the board's head.
16. There is nothing between us, papa; but if there were, men speaking ill of him would not deter me.
17. Instead of going to Squire Williams', Abigail hurried home.
18. All the "Times'" correspondents discuss the speeches against the project.
19. It looks like the dog of our nearest neighbor's.
20. What are the chances of the coal strike being over soon?
21. From a safe distance they watched the volcano's discharge.
22. It is neither the captain nor the manager's duty.

Plural Forms. — The plurals of some nouns in everyday use are often incorrectly formed.

I

Use two spoonfuls of flour.

II

Use two *spoonsful* of flour.

If two spoons are each to be filled once, "two spoons full" is correct; if one spoon is to be filled twice, "two spoonfuls" is correct. "Spoonful," "cupful," "pailful," "shovelful," etc., are, like "peck" and "pint," words of measure, and form the plural in the regular way.

I

Two Mussulmans came next.

II

Two *Mussulmen* came next.

In the sentence under II, *Mussulmen* is incorrect. The plural of "Dutchman" is "Dutchmen," of "Englishman" "Englishmen," of "Frenchman" "Frenchmen"; but the plural of "Mussulman" is "Mussulmans," of "German" "Germans," of "Ottoman" "Ottomans": the former are, the latter are not, compounds of "man." For a similar reason, the plural of "churchman" is "churchmen," of "layman" "laymen"; that of "cayman" (alligator) is "caymans," of "talisman" "talismans."

I

Thus I had two mothers-in-law
at once.

II

Thus I had two *mother-in-laws*
at once.

"Mothers-in-law" is correct; for "mother" is the fundamental, or distinguishing, part of the compound, and therefore receives the plural inflection. For a similar reason, "men-of-war" and "sail-lofts" are both correct.

I

Mary was long in finding
among the idle heirs apparent any
one who could satisfy her taste.

II

Mary was long in finding
among the idle *heir apparents* any
one who could satisfy her taste.

"Heirs apparent" is correct; for "heirs" is the fundamental part of the expression, as is "courts" in "courts martial."

I

In the office were twenty man-
clerks and ten woman-clerks.

II

In the office were twenty *men-*
clerks and ten *women-clerks*.

"Man-clerks" and "woman-clerks" are preferable to *men-clerks* and *women-clerks*; for "clerk" is the fundamental, or essential, part of the compound, "man" or "woman" the descriptive, or attributive, part. In "maid-servants" the same rule holds; but "men-servants" and "women-servants" (both parts plural), which occur in the King James translation of the Bible, are still in good use. So, too, in "lords-lieutenants," "lords-justices," "knights-templars," "knights-bachelors," "knights-bannerets,"¹ and a few similar expressions, the plural termination is in each case retained in both parts of the compound. Usually, however, it is properly given to only the second word of a compound title, as in "lieutenant-colonels," "brigadier-generals."¹ According to present usage, the better plural of "attorney-general" is "attorney-generals,"² of "adjutant-general" "adjutants-general."

¹ These compound titles are written either with or without hyphens.

² "Attorneys general," which is sometimes seen, was once in good use as the plural of "attorney general" as distinguished from "attorney special."

In an expression compounded of "brother" and another substantive, the plural inflection is now confined to the second word, as "brother-officers,"¹ "brother-heroes";¹ formerly it was given to "brother" also.

A frequent question is, "What is the correct plural of Mr., Mrs., or Miss So-and-So?" Of "Mr. Brown" the usual plural is "the Messrs. Brown," of "Dr. Black" "the Drs. Black"; it is, however, correct to say, "There are two Mr. Browns," "There are two Dr. Blacks." Of "Mrs. Brown" but one plural is correct, "the Mrs. Browns." "The Misses Brown" and "the Miss Browns" are both in good use.

Some nouns have but one form for both singular and plural: *e.g.* "deer," "grouse," "moose," "series," "sheep," "species," "swine." The singular form of many others is often used as a plural, even when there is a regularly inflected plural besides. Thus, the plural of "biscuit" is "biscuit" or "biscuits"; of "fish," "fish" or "fishes"; of "fowl," "fowl" or "fowls"; of "plover," "plover" or "plovers"; of "quail," "quail" or "quails"; of "snipe," "snipe" or "snipes"; of "trout," "trout" or "trouts." Usually the singular form of such a noun refers to a collection, the plural in "s" to individuals or to different species.

In some cases there are two plurals that differ in meaning: *e.g.* "brothers" (by birth), "brethren" (of a society); "dies" (for coining or stamping), "dice" (for play); "indexes" (in books), "indices" (in arithmetic and algebra, and in most general senses); "pennies" (separate coins), "pence" (a sum of money); "shots" (discharges), "shot" (balls).

Take pains to learn peculiar plurals.

¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, an expression compounded of "brother" and another substantive has the hyphen more frequently in the singular than in the plural; for in the plural the attributive relation of "brother" to the second word "is sufficiently shown by the inflexion of the second word and [the] non-inflexion of *brother*."

EXERCISE XVI

Change the number of each noun within quotation-marks ; make other changes if necessary : —

1. Use one "spoonful" of mustard.
2. He acted in his "brother-in-law's" behalf.
3. That spare room may be kept for my horses and those of my "aide-de-camp."
4. His hopes may be cut off, for he is only "heir presumptive."
5. The very "maid-servant" in a family has the same notion.
6. This flower is of a different "species."
7. She buys a "tooth-brush" every month.
8. My uncle was a "Dutchman."
9. He was an "Ottoman" and a "Mussulman."
10. Have you faith in such a "talisman"?
11. He is, moreover, a staunch "churchman."
12. Shall I send up a "biscuit" with your tea?
13. We brought home a "moose" and a "grouse."
14. The "attorney-general" should be consulted.
15. Lady Arabella was so kind as to let his little girl share the lessons of "Miss Gresham."
16. Then I saw for the first time a Portuguese "man-of-war."
17. What are the duties of a "lord-justice"?
18. A "court martial" will probably be held.
19. My brother is a "knight-templar."

EXERCISE XVII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the expression in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. I have two handfuls (hands full) of gold-dust.
2. Two dice (dies) were found in the prisoner's pockets.
3. He was always kind to his brothers (brethren).
4. How many shot (shots) did you count?
5. He carried two pailfuls (pails full) of water up hill.
6. He gave the beggar six pennies (pence).
7. In this new algebra there are serious errors in the indexes (indices).

Singular or Plural?—Nouns properly singular are sometimes treated as if they were plural, nouns properly plural as if they were singular.

I

He is a long way off.

II

He is a long *ways* off.

The use of *ways* as a noun in the singular number is a fault that is not confined to the illiterate.

"News" was once, but is no longer, in good use as a plural noun; "tidings" seems to be still plural. "Means" in the sense of "instrument"—as "a means to an end," "by such means as these"—is sometimes singular, sometimes plural; in the sense of "income," as "His means are ample," it is always plural. "Pains" in the sense of "thoughtful effort" or "care," as "The pains they had taken was very great," is usually singular; as the opposite of "pleasures," it is plural.

Some nouns are always plural: *e.g.* "billiards," "draughts," "quoits," "skittles," when they are used as the names of games; "assets," "bellows," "bitters," "cattle," "dregs," "eaves," "nuptials," "pincers," "proceeds," "riches," "scissors," "shambles," "shears," "suds," "thanks,"¹ "tongs," "trousers," "tweezers," "vitals," "wages."²

A few nouns are treated by some writers as singular, by others as plural: *e.g.* "headquarters," "measles," "mumps," "odds," "whereabouts." Sometimes the number of a noun is determined by the meaning. "Alms," for example, is singular in the first of the following sentences, plural in the second: "Every alms is a fresh badge of slavery"³ (Kingsley), "Alms are but the vehicles of

¹ The singular "thank" was formerly used: *e.g.* "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye?" (Luke vi. 33).

² The singular "wage" was formerly used, as "a mighty wage" (Drayton). Of late years it has been revived by some writers on political economy, especially in phrases like "a living wage" and in compounds like "wage-earners"; but the weight of authority, including that of political economists of high standing, is in favor of "wages."

³ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

prayer ”¹ (Dryden). “Politics” is singular in the first of the following sentences, plural in the second : “Politics” as a profession was therefore unknown to him” (Trollope), “Politics make a terrible demand on a man’s time” (Trollope). “Statistics” is singular when it means the science which has to do with the collection and classification of facts, plural when it means those facts themselves. “Æsthetics,” “chromatics,” “civics,” “dynamics,” “economics,” “ethics,” “mathematics,” “phonetics,” “statics,” are more frequently singular than plural, because they are commonly used as the names of certain sciences or systems: *e.g.* “Ethics regards man as a free being”; “Mathematics embraces three departments.” “Athletics,” “calisthenics,” “gymnastics,” are more frequently plural than singular, because each is commonly understood to include several sports or exercises: *e.g.* “Track athletics are not too absorbing or too exacting to permit the steady pursuit of the main end of college life.” In America, “inning” (in base-ball or cricket) is sometimes seen, but the usual form for both singular and plural is “innings”: *e.g.* “There was only one innings.” In Great Britain, “inning” is never used; “innings” serves as both singular and plural. “Links” (in golf), in the absence of a singular form, is treated sometimes as a singular, sometimes as a plural: *e.g.* “The new links in Roxburgh was opened to-day,” “The Country Club links were crowded on Saturday afternoon.”

The following sentences exemplify an interesting distinction between the singular and the plural: “This twenty years have I been with thee,”² “For these two years hath the famine been in the land.”³ In the first sentence, the years spoken of are regarded as forming one unit or period; in the second, they are regarded separately.

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

² Genesis xxxi. 38.

³ Genesis xlv. 6.

I

He was in Europe during the twenty-second and the twenty-third year [*or* the twenty-second and twenty-third years] of his life.

II

He was in Europe during the twenty-second and the twenty-third *years* of his life.

In "the twenty-second and the twenty-third," the repetition of the article before "twenty-third" shows that each year is thought of by itself; "year," not *years*, is therefore correct. In "the twenty-second and twenty-third," the omission of the article before "twenty-third" shows that the two years are thought of together; "years" is therefore correct.

I

The ingratitude of those whose hearts are set on one object led her to make light of what had been her great consolation.

Sometimes men forget the world and reveal their inner selves.

II

The ingratitude of those whose *heart* is set on one object led her to make light of what had been her great consolation.

Sometimes men forget the world and reveal their inner *self*.

There must be as many "hearts" and "selves" as there are persons.

I

She is the salt [*or* of the salt] of the earth.

II

She is *one of* the salt of the earth.

Since "salt" is not a plural, it is incorrect to speak of "*one of* the salt." We may say either "the salt" or "of the salt" — either the whole of it or a part. "She is the salt of the earth" is, of course, the more complimentary expression.

I

This society is known as "The Women's Auxiliary of the Young Men's Christian Association."

II

This society is known as "The *Woman's* Auxiliary of the Young Men's Christian Association."

"Women's" is preferable to *Woman's*; for the "Auxiliary" is composed, not of woman, but of women. A

reader of the sentence under II would naturally ask, "Why 'Woman's' and not 'Man's'?" or "Why 'Men's' and not 'Women's'?"

In determining the number of a noun, pay attention to meaning rather than to form.

EXERCISE XVIII

Discuss the number of each word within quotation-marks: —

1. As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good "news" from a far country. — PROVERBS XXV. 25.

2. A man is taken aback suddenly by "tidings" such as these. — TROLLOPE.

3. And for my "means," I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little. — SHAKSPERE.¹

4. The conditions of American life, too, were such that young men looked upon scholarship neither as an end nor as a "means." — LOWELL.

5. I have . . . visited Honolulu, where "politics" are (if possible) a shade more exasperating than they are with us. — STEVENSON.

6. I always held . . . that "politics" was the dirtiest, the most foolish, and the most random of human employments. — STEVENSON.

7. "Gymnastics" are used with success in institutions for the cure of inebriates. — AMERICAN NEWSPAPER.

8. I have served your worship truly, sir, "this" eight years. — SHAKSPERE.²

9. "These" fifteen years you have been in a dream. — SHAKSPERE.³

10. I hear that Wall is to have another "innings." — HUXLEY.

11. The "odds"

Is that we scarce are men and you are gods. — SHAKSPERE.⁴

EXERCISE XIX

Which word is preferable, that in parenthesis or that which precedes? —

1. Such gymnastics do (does) not interest me.

2. Our last news were (was) that he had escaped from Bristol.

¹ Hamlet, iv. 5.

³ The Taming of the Shrew, Induction 2.

² 2 Henry IV, v. 1.

⁴ Cymbeline, v. 2.

3. Tidings was (were) brought of the massacre on Snake River.
4. The widow's means was (were) at first large, but it was (they were) soon exhausted by the prodigality of her son.
5. The assets of the company are (is) \$167,000.
6. The dregs in the cup was (were) found to be very bitter.
7. The eaves of the new house are (is) ten feet above the ground.
8. In many schools, athletics are (is) run into the ground.
9. The nuptials of Gratiano and Nerissa were (was) celebrated at the same time as those (that) of Bassanio and Portia.
10. Ethics are (is) becoming more and more prominent in the discussions of political economists.
11. The proceeds was (were) given to the hospital.
12. His riches took to themselves (itself) wings.
13. This (these) scissors is (are) sharp.
14. Please pour this (these) suds on the rose plants.
15. An old man who had travelled a great way (ways) found himself so weary that he called upon death to deliver him.
16. I shall be at home the second and third days (day) of the month.

EXERCISE XX

Correct errors in the use of the singular or the plural ; give your reason for each correction:—

1. A little ways up the road you will see a guide-post.
2. Twenty bellowses were all he had.
3. The news were now almost current in Barchester.
4. The people make use of a hollow cane instead of a bellows.
5. It is a mistake to think that the German works for a low wage ; he is as anxious for a high wage as any Celt.
6. Carp did not know why men carry a lady's glove in their pocket.
7. The Author's Club enjoyed one of Colonel Higginson's inimitable after-dinner speeches.
8. I am connecte d with many Ladies' Aids and Woman's Guilds.

Nouns of Foreign Origin.—Many nouns of foreign origin have been adopted in the singular number without change. Some of these have foreign plurals only, others English plurals only, others both foreign and English plurals. Unless such a noun is known in all its forms, it is likely to be misused.

I

The tableau was beautiful.

II

The *tableaux* was beautiful.

"Tableau" has been adopted into English with the French plural, "tableaux." "Beau" has a French plural, "beaux," and an English plural, "beaus."

I

The captive told the bandit that he was too young to be engaged in such a calling.

II

The captive told the *banditti* that he was too young to be engaged in such a calling.

"Bandit" (from the Italian "bandito") has an English plural, "bandits," and a corrupted Italian plural, "banditti."¹ Of these, "banditti" is usually preferred.

I

I am sorry to say that I am not an alumnus of this university.

II

I am sorry to say that I am not an *alumni* of this university.

"Alumnus," a Latin masculine form, has a Latin plural, "alumni." The feminine forms of this word are "alumna" for the singular, "alumnae" for the plural.

I

Here was the terminus of the road.

II

Here was the *termini* of the road.

"Terminus," a Latin masculine form, has a Latin plural, "termini." "Bacillus" has a Latin plural, "bacilli." "Focus," "fungus," "radius," have both Latin and English plurals, "foci," "focuses," etc.; the Latin are usually preferred. "Crocus," "hippopotamus," "syllabus," have both Latin and English plurals, "croci," "crocuses," etc.; the English are usually preferred. "Prospectus" and "rhinoceros" have English plurals only, "prospectuses," "rhinoceroses." "Genius" meaning a person of genius has an English plural, "geniuses"; meaning a spirit, it has a Latin plural, "genii." "Apparatus" has a Latin plural, "apparatus," and an English plural, "apparatuses"; the English is preferred.

¹ For the full history of this word, see the Oxford English Dictionary.

I

I never met so many igno-
ramuses.

There is no such word as *ignorami*. "*Ignoramus*" is not a Latin substantive, but a form of a Latin verb; it means literally "we are ignorant." It has a regular English plural, "*ignoramus*."

II

I never met so many *ignorami*.

I

The *vertebra* was dislocated.

"*Vertebra*," a Latin feminine form, has a Latin plural, "*vertebræ*." "*Formula*" has a Latin plural, "*formulæ*," and an English plural, "*formulas*." "*Panacea*" has an English plural, "*panaceas*."

"*Analysis*," "*crisis*," "*hypothesis*," "*oasis*," "*parenthesis*," "*synthesis*," "*thesis*," have Latin plurals, "*analyses*," "*crises*," etc.

II

The *vertebræ* was dislocated.

I

The addendum includes [*or* the addenda include] three copies of Chaucer's "*Canterbury Tales*."

There I found a *bacterium*.

The study of English should be a part of every college curriculum.

This datum is all we have.

The passage cited was a mere dictum of the judge.

We have never seen a writer who could crowd so many grammatical errata [*or* errors in grammar] into one sentence.

This is an important erratum.

He took a memorandum-book from his pocket, and read from it a memorandum.

In that lower stratum of society, man is a brute to the wife who angers him.

II

The *addenda* includes three copies of Chaucer's "*Canterbury Tales*."

There I found a *bacteria*.

The study of English should be a part of every college *curricula*.

This *data* is all we have.

The passage cited was a mere *dicta* of the judge.

We have never seen a writer who could crowd so many grammatical *erratum* into one sentence.

This is an important *errata*.

He took a memorandum-book from his pocket, and read from it a *memoranda*.

In that lower *strata* of society, man is a brute to the wife who angers him.

“Addendum,” “bacterium,” “curriculum” “datum,” “dictum,” “erratum,” “memorandum,” “stratum,” Latin neuter forms, have Latin plurals in “a,” “addenda,” “bacteria,” etc.; some of them have also regular English plurals, but these are rarely used. “Arcanum” and “maximum” have Latin plurals in “a,” “arcana,” “maxima”; “fulcrum,” “medium,” “momentum,” “ultimatum,” have both Latin and English plurals, “fulcra,” “fulcrums,” “media,” “mediums,” etc.; “encomium,” “modicum,” “nostrum,” have English plurals only, “encomiums,”¹ “modicums,” “nostrums.”

“Genus,” another Latin neuter form, has a Latin plural, “genera.” “Stamen” meaning the stamen of a flower has an English plural, “stamens”; meaning a warp-thread, it has a Latin plural, “stamina,” which is also used (commonly as a plural, but sometimes as a singular) to signify vigor or tone, as “mental stamina.”

“Saturnalia” is a neuter plural form adopted from the Latin, but it is sometimes used as a singular. “Insignia” and “paraphernalia” are also neuter plural forms, and are always used as plurals.

I

The water is full of animalcules.

II

The water is full of *animalculæ*.

There is no such word as *animalculæ*. The Latin form, which is in scientific use, is “animalculum,” with plural “animalcula.” The English form is “animalcule,” with plural “animalcules.”

I

This is a remarkable phenomenon, especially for the middle of summer.

II

This is a remarkable *phenomena*, especially for the middle of summer.

“Phenomenon,” from a Greek neuter form, has a plural formed on the Greek model, “phenomena.” “Autom-

¹ A Latin plural, “encomia,” was once in good use; but it is nearly obsolete.

aton" and "criterion," words of like origin, have plurals formed in the same way, "automata," "criteria," and also English plurals in "s"; "automatons" is used more frequently than "automata," "criteria" than "criterions."

I

Miss Tox emerges from behind the cherub's leg, when all is quiet, and comes slowly down from the gallery.

There was the chancel, guarded by two little cherubs.

"Cherub" and "seraph" have English plurals, "cherubs," "seraphs," and Hebrew plurals, "cherubim," "seraphim." "*Cherubim*" and "*seraphim*" as singulars,¹ with plurals "*cherubims*," "*seraphims*," though once in good use, are now vulgar.

If you use a noun of foreign origin, be sure that you know it in both the singular and the plural number.

II

Miss Tox emerges from behind the *cherubim's* leg, when all is quiet, and comes slowly down from the gallery.

There was the chancel, guarded by two little *cherubims*.

EXERCISE XXI

Change the number of each noun within quotation-marks; make other changes if necessary:—

1. A material "datum" in the calculation was omitted.
2. When cultures of this "bacterium" are kept for some time, their virulence becomes diminished.
3. He jotted it down with many another scrawled "memorandum."
4. Errors noted in a list of corrections attached to a book are usually termed "errata."
5. Palatka is one "terminus" of the road, Kenka the other.
6. Every baron in the land was a "bandit."
7. The "analysis" of the paper showed that it contained arsenic.
8. Many a so-called "animalcule" has been shown to be a plant.
9. He proves himself a great "ignoramus."
10. Follow the "formula" exactly.
11. It was not uncommon for a student to publish his own "syllabus."

¹ The earliest English forms were "cherubin" and "seraphin."

12. One "radius" of a circle is as long as another.
13. We each wrote but one "thesis" in the year.
14. These two plants belong to different "genera."
15. You will find that the ordinary statesman is wont to fail in an extraordinary "crisis."
16. What will not a "beau" attempt to please the fair?
17. We have no "criterion" by which, in these matters, we may measure degrees of good and evil.
18. That which was formerly the radiant point is now the "focus."
19. Greek has almost disappeared from the High School "curriculum."
20. This flower has but one "stamen."
21. The most considerable "phenomenon" belonging to terrestrial bodies is gravitation. [Write "One of the most," etc.]
22. He was an "alumnus" of Glasgow.
23. Dr. Yeo has made an estimate of the length of this "bacillus."
24. In colleges this conversational "fungus" springs up luxuriantly.
25. There are amusing accounts of the means employed to snare a "rhinoceros" or a "hippopotamus."
26. She looked below on the straight-grown purple "crocus."
27. The "dicta" of judges have often been confusing.
28. A "fulcrum" is the point against which a lever is placed.
29. The "hypothesis" is untenable.
30. The "arcana" of political intrigue are mysterious.
31. Human beings are living "automata."
32. Institutions and education have ended by becoming the great "panaceas" of modern democrats.

EXERCISE XXII

Correct errors in the use of foreign nouns ; give your reason for each correction : —

1. The Electoral Commission had made the two Houses of Congress a mere addenda to a conspiracy.
2. This kind of lily has four stamina.
3. Why should she wish to be a cherubim, when 'tis flesh and blood that makes her adorable?
4. From this data it will be possible to determine whether the moon has an atinosphere.

5. A natural phenomena is under the control of natural law.
6. The gills of this fungi turn black in a short time.
7. Below the sand was a strata of clay.
8. His acquaintance comprised a great number of the most intellectual men of his time, and when was there such a constellation of genii?
9. There we shall be with seraphims and cherubims, creatures that will dazzle your eyes.
10. Peridinium is ranked by some among plants, by others among the animalculæ.
11. The dashing hat was regarded as being almost as much an insignia of the South as the "bonnie blue" itself.
12. This is a universal panaceum.
13. She is an alumni of Wellesley.

Feminine Forms in "-ess." — Many feminine forms in "-ess" are established in the language: *e.g.* "abbess," "actress," "adventuress," "countess," "deaconess," "empress," "enchantress," "giantess," "goddess," "heiress," "hostess," "Jewess," "lady mayoress,"¹ "lioness," "marchioness," "mistress," "murderess," "negress," "ogress," "patroness," "postmistress," "priestess," "seamstress," "shepherdess," "songstress," "sorceress," "tailoress," "tigress," "waitress." A few years ago, *authoress*, *poetess*, and *doctoress* (or *doctress*) were often seen in print; but nowadays women who write books or practise medicine are usually termed "authors," "poets," "doctors." *Editress*, *educatress*, and *instructress* have never had much vogue. *Conductress* and *sculptress* are to be found in some books, but they are avoided by most careful writers. Several centuries ago there was a disposition to coin words in "-ess" freely; but the tendency of modern usage is "to treat the agent-nouns in *-er*, and the substantives indicating profession or occupation, as of common gender, unless there be some special reason to the contrary."²

¹ As, "the lord mayor and the lady mayoress of London." In America we do not call a mayor's wife "mayoress."

² See the Oxford English Dictionary, under "-ess."

Forms in “-ist.” — Many nouns in “-ist” are in good use, as “anarchist,” “atheist,” “botanist,” “chemist,” “copyist,” “idealist,” “machinist,” “materialist,” “optimist,” “pessimist,” “pharmacist,” “philanthropist,” “pianist,” “prohibitionist,” “violinist”; others, if they ever were in good use, are not so now, as *harpist* for “harper”; others are simply vulgar, as *fightist* for “fighter,” *pokerist* for “poker-player,” *polkist* for “polka-dancer,” *poloist* for “polo-player,” *speculatist* for “speculator,” *speedist* for “fast rider,” *walkist* for “walker.” *Scientist* has been used by some writers of reputation; but it is looked upon with disfavor by others, including not a few men of science. *Stylist* (meaning a lover, or master, of style) has been used by some good writers; but it is offensive to many ears, and it has not yet established itself in the language.¹

Avoid nouns in “-ess” or “-ist” that are not in good use.

EXERCISE XXIII

Which of these words are in good use? —

Actress, adventuress, authoress, deaconess, doctress, editress, instructress, lioness, murderess, negress, ogress, patroness, poetess, postmistress, sculptress, seamstress, tigress.

Anarchist, atheist, copyist, fightist, harpist, pessimist, pharmacist, philanthropist, pianist, poloist, prohibitionist, scientist, violinist, walkist.

Abbreviated Forms. — Good use adopts some abbreviated forms, but brands as barbarisms many others.

Some of those condemned by Addison and Swift at the beginning of the eighteenth century are current still, and are still to be condemned: *e.g.* *incog* for “incognito,” *phiz* for “physiognomy.” Some that were condemned by them have disappeared; but many others, equally objectionable, are often heard: *e.g.* *ad* for “advertisement,” *bike*

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under “-ist.”

for "bicycle," *cap* for "captain," *co-ed* for "woman student at a co-educational college," *compo* for "composition," *Cong* for "Congressman," *corp* for "corporal," *doc* for "doctor," *electro* for "electrotype," *exam* for "examination," *gent* for "gentleman," *gov* for "governor," *grad* for "graduate," *gym* for "gymnasium," *knickers* for "knickerbockers," *pants*¹ for "pantaloons" ("trousers" is far preferable), *pard* for "partner," *phone* for "telephone," *photo* for "photograph," *prelim* for "preliminary examination," *prep* for "preparatory student," *prex* or *prexy* for "president," *prof* for "professor," *quad* for "quadrangle," *spec* for "speculation," *sub* for "sub-freshman," *supe* for "super-numerary," *typo* for "typographer."

On the other hand, some abbreviated forms — *e.g.* "cab" from "cabriolet," "chum" from "chamber-fellow" or (perhaps) "chamber-mate," "consols" from "consolidated annuities," "hack" from "hackney-coach," "mob" from *mobile vulgus*, "penult" from "penultima," "proxy" and "proctor" from "procuracy" and "procurator," "van" from "vanguard" and "caravan" — have established themselves. *Confab* for "confabulation" has long been trying to get into the language, but it seems to be still on a colloquial footing only. *Curios* for "curiosities," an abbreviation of more recent date, is avoided by careful writers.

Avoid abbreviated forms that are not in good use.

EXERCISE XXIV

Discuss the propriety of the italicized forms; for those which are not in good use substitute better expressions: —

1. I called a *cab*, and was whisked away to Hill Street.
2. *Cong* Payer won't vote, but *Corp* Hanner will.
3. The *prof* dismissed his class early.
4. Everybody had some rare *curios* to show me.

¹ The "trade name," it is said.

5. The male students do not intend to admit the *co-eds* to their athletic contests.

6. Every peer may make another lord of parliament his *proxy*, to vote for him in his absence.

7. From the time the train started till it rolled into Saratoga, there was one long series of political debates and *confabs*.

8. Who wants a *photo* of such a *phiz* as mine?

9. Piling blankets, kettles, clothing, dishes, in one promiscuous heap in the *van*, we were off.

10. I fight conspicuous in the *van* of war.

11. The *mob* of gentlemen who wrote with ease.

12. 'Tis a pity that the *pants* of young rhyming *gents* always bag at the knees.

13. They allowed him to take *electros* of all their woodcuts.

14. He stepped forth in the black jersey, white *knickers*, and black stockings of the First Fifteen.

Misused Nouns. — As the number of nouns in the language is very large, the opportunities to confound one with another are so many that the task of enumerating all the cases of misused nouns must be left to makers of dictionaries or of books of synonyms. We may, however, note some of the pitfalls that lie in the way of unpractised writers.

Nouns that are similar in appearance or in sound are sometimes confounded with one another: —

I

His apparent acceptance of the situation was feigned.

II

His apparent *acceptation* of the situation was feigned.

“Acceptation” is now restricted to the sense of “the accepted, or received, meaning of a word or a passage”: *e.g.* “In its present acceptation, the word has no such meaning.” “Acceptance” is the act of accepting, or taking, what is offered, as “We beg your acceptance of a little gift”; it also means favorable reception, assent, as “She sang with marked acceptance,” “This theory has met with almost universal acceptance.”

I

In a sudden access of grief,
she rushed from the room.

II

In a sudden *accession* of grief,
she rushed from the room.

"Accession" means (1) the act of coming to an office or an honor; (2) the act of coming to join one's self to; (3) that which is added, an increase: *e.g.* "This was the king's first act after his accession to the throne," "England had gained greatly by the accession of the valiant Thurbill"¹ (E. A. Freeman), "Every year the fraternity received fresh accessions of princes and nobles"¹ (Prescott). "Access" means (1) admission to the presence or to the use of; (2) approach, way of entrance; (3) sudden emotion: *e.g.* "Have you access to the library?" "The only access is by a narrow neck of land," "She threw herself on the sofa in an access of anger."

I

In "The English Humourists,"
the author is awe-stricken by the
genius of Swift, but is disgusted
with his acts.

II

In "The English Humourists,"
the author is awe-stricken by the
genius of Swift, but disgusted
with his *actions*.

In this example, "acts" is preferable to *actions*; for "act" means a thing done, a deed, "action" a state or a process of doing. This distinction, which is observed by many, but not all, good authors, is exemplified by the expressions "an act of obedience," "the act of a coward," "an action at law," "the action of the heart."

I

The leaves thicken with the
advance of the season.

II

The leaves thicken with the
advancement of the season.

All this goes a long way to
secure advancement under the
party system.

All this goes a long way to
secure *advance* under the party
system.

In the first example, "advance" is preferable to *advancement*; for the season is spoken of as moving, not as

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

being moved, forward. In the second example, "advancement" is preferable to *advance*; for some one is represented as being advanced by others.

I

The citizen has little time to think about political problems. Engrossing all his working hours, his vocation leaves him only stray moments for this duty.

II

The citizen has little time to think about political problems. Engrossing all his working hours, his *avocation* leaves him only stray moments for this duty.

In this example, "vocation" is preferable to *avocation*; for the writer is referring to the regular business, or calling, of the citizen. An "avocation" is something aside from one's regular calling, a by-work or an amusement. The plural "avocations" in the sense of "occupations" has some support; but it is avoided by most careful writers.

I

The observance of the centenarian birthday was general.

Though she gossiped with her neighbors, she did not like to be under their observation.

II

The *observation* of the centenarian birthday was general.

Though she gossiped with her neighbors, she liked not to be under their *observance*.

The centenarian birthday was celebrated; "she" disliked to be looked at. We speak of the "observation" of a planet or an eclipse, of weather "observations"; of the "observance" of a fast, a festival, a rule, civilities. The distinction between the two words is clearly brought out by Dr. Holmes: "There was not a nook or a corner in the whole house fit to lodge a very respectable ghost, for every part was as open to observation as a literary man's character and condition"; "To such observances of it [the Puritan Sabbath] I was born and bred."

I

When he proposed a second time to Elizabeth, his proposal was accepted.

II

When he proposed a second time to Elizabeth, his *proposition* was accepted.

A "proposition" is a subject for discussion: *e.g.* "Before beginning his argument, Webster laid down several fundamental propositions." A "proposal" is "something proposed to be done, which the person addressed may accept or reject":¹ *e.g.* "He made her a proposal of marriage."

I

Though he had no relatives,
he had many dear friends.

The professor was lecturing on
the domestic relations of the
lower animals.

II

Though he had no *relations*, he
had many dear friends.

The professor was lecturing on
the domestic *relationships* which
exist among the lower animals.

Relations in the sense of "relatives" is not without authority; but precision is gained by the use of "relatives" to mean kinsfolk, of "relations" to mean connections between any persons or things. We all say, however, not "poor *relatives*," but "poor relations." "Relationship" properly means kinship: *e.g.* "A relationship existed between the two families."

I

The great stimulus to original
thought is debt.

The influx of persons of lower
standards crushed out pleasant
companionships and the stimulus
of joint aspirations toward moral
excellence.

II

The great *stimulant* to original
thought is debt.

The influx of persons of lower
standards crushed out the pleas-
ant companionships and *stimula-
tion* of joint aspirations toward
moral excellence.

"Stimulant" is used of that which induces a temporary increase of activity in the body or in any of its organs; "stimulus," which originally meant a goad, now denotes the means by which one is incited to feeling, thought, or action; "stimulation" is either the act of stimulating or the state of being stimulated. Alcohol and coffee are "stimulants"; patriotism may be a "stimulus" to a noble

¹ The Century Dictionary.

act, greed to an ignoble one; medicines are used for the "stimulation" of the heart.

I

The cruets need filling, and I
can't find the funnel.

II

The cruets need filling, and I
can't find the *tunnel*.

The conical vessel through which liquids or powders are poured is sometimes called a *tunnel*; but "funnel" is more properly used in this sense. "Tunnel," which originally meant a flue, is now used chiefly in the sense of "an underground passage for a road or a railway."

Discriminate between nouns that are similar in appearance or in sound.

EXERCISE XXV¹

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each noun: —

Acceptation, acceptance; accession, access; action, act; advance, advancement; avocation, vocation; observation, observance; proposition, proposal; relation, relative, relationship; stimulant, stimulation, stimulus; tunnel, funnel.

EXERCISE XXVI

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the noun in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. The acceptance (acceptation) of this word is doubtful.
2. The act (action) of Napoleon was premeditated.
3. The colonel's advance (advancement) was not long delayed.
4. Literature has been Dr. Holmes's avocation (vocation).
5. The professor advised me to be especially careful in my observation (observance) of the religious ceremonies of Passion Week.
6. This proposal (proposition) made both Republican and Democratic senators indignant.

¹NOTE FOR TEACHERS. — It is hoped that this exercise and others of a similar kind will help the young writer (1) to enlarge his vocabulary and (2) to understand the exact meaning of every word that he meets in his reading or uses in his compositions. Each teacher will judge for himself what amount of the work called for may fairly be demanded.

7. My relations (relatives) here are charming.
8. Shall I give your son a stimulus (stimulant)?
9. Where is the tunnel (funnel)?

EXERCISE XXVII

Insert in each blank the noun that expresses the exact meaning; ¹ explain your choice: —

Acceptation, acceptance

1. Neither Jadu nor I was an artist in the proper — of the word.
2. The assertion finds — in every rank of society.
3. In its common —, "philosophy" means "the search for wisdom."

Accession, access

1. Markets are so difficult of — that much wealth is wasted.
2. In an — of patriotism, he gave his brother over to death.
3. Mr. Banks desires to join the club; he will be a great —.
4. — to the outer court was through a massive door.
5. Victoria married after her — to the throne.
6. He has not obtained any — of strength from his alliance.

Action, act

1. I cannot do so cruel an —.
2. Another mode of — was proposed by Henry Clay.
3. To attempt resistance would be the — of a madman.

Advance, advancement

1. This refinement makes a daily —, and will in time, I hope, raise our language to perfection.
2. My own services are not so conspicuous as to warrant my —.
3. At the brisk — of the grenadiers, they retired.

Avocation, vocation

1. The young lawyer, surrounded by his law-books, took up his — with enthusiasm.
2. Let your base-ball be a pastime, not a business; let it be your —, not your —.
3. Bridge-whist and ping-pong are their —s.

¹ In some cases one noun or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Observation, observance

1. The North American Indian has great powers of —.
2. The Pharisees were strict in their — of religious festivals.
3. He is arranging for a careful — of the eclipse.

Proposition, proposal

1. The — that each of us relinquish something was accepted.
2. I dissent from that —.
3. A stranger — for the hand of a woman man never made.

Relation, relative, relationship

1. Our friends and —s stand weeping by.
2. —s between the two countries are becoming strained.
3. We are bound together by ties of —.
4. What the — between them is, I do not know.
5. Their domestic —s are their own business, not the world's.

Stimulant, stimulation, stimulus

1. The study of literature is of great value as a mental —.
2. Besides alcohol, he knew no — but tobacco.
3. He worked hard under the — of a desire to get rich.
4. Competition tends to the — of business.
5. Self-interest is a powerful — to good.

Tunnel, funnel

1. The grape juice is poured into the tun by means of a —.
2. The shortest route to Italy is through the St. Gothard —.
3. You can make a paper — to pour the spice through.

Other nouns sometimes confounded with one another because of a resemblance in appearance or in sound are : —

Admittance, admission. — “Admittance” is used of a place, “admission” of privileges or position. One may gain “admittance” to a building, “admission” to college or to the bar.

Ceremony, ceremonial. — A “ceremony” is a rite, as “the ceremony of baptism”; a “ceremonial” is a prescribed system of ceremonies, a ritual, as “the ceremonial prescribed in the Anglican service.” The adjective “cere-

monial" corresponds to both "ceremony" and "ceremonial"; the adjective "ceremonious" is properly applied to forms of civility, or to persons punctilious in the observance of such forms, as "He made a very ceremonious bow," "You are too ceremonious."

Completion, completeness. — "Completion" is the act of completing, "completeness" the condition of being complete: *e.g.* "The completion of this building left twenty masons without work"; "If the work of an architect ever attained completeness, his did."

Council, counsel. — A "council" is a body of persons met to consult or to give advice; "counsel" is advice, or a person engaged to give legal advice: *e.g.* "At the suggestion of our counsel, we called a family council to take counsel together."

Cultivation, culture. — "Cultivation" is the act of cultivating, "culture" the result of cultivation: *e.g.* "By the steady cultivation of our mental powers, we may gradually acquire true culture." A similar distinction once existed between the verbs "cultivate" and "culture," but the latter is no longer in good use. After the other forms of "culture" had disappeared, the past participle, "cultured," lingered as an adjective; but at present it has no standing in literature or in polite society.

Deception, deceit. — "Deception" is the act, or the practice, of deceiving: *e.g.* "He has practised deception so long that he doesn't know how to be sincere." "Deceit" is either the quality of deceiving, as "He is full of deceit," or an instance of deception, as "Her little deceits were always transparent."

Emigration, immigration; emigrant, immigrant. — "Emigration" is the moving out of a country, "immigration" the moving into it. Foreigners who come to live in America are "emigrants" from their fatherland, "immigrants" into America. A similar distinction exists between the verbs "emigrate" and "immigrate."

Enormity, enormousness. — “Enormity” is used of deeds of unusual horror, “enormousness” of things of unusual size. We speak of the “enormity” of Cæsar Borgia’s crimes, of the “enormousness” of the Rothschilds’ wealth.

Esteem, estimation, estimate. — Each of these words implies an exercise of judgment. The judgment expressed by “esteem” is favorable, as “Esteem is the beginning of affection”; that expressed by “estimation” is either favorable or unfavorable, as “He stood high [or low] in popular estimation.” The judgment expressed by “estimate” is approximate, since it is “based on considerations of probability, respecting the number, amount, magnitude, or position of anything”¹: we may make an “estimate” of the distance of an object, of the cost of a house, of the character of an acquaintance. A similar distinction exists between the verbs “esteem” and “estimate.”

Falsity, falseness. — “Falsity,” which is commonly applied to things, means non-conformity to truth, with no suggestion of blame, as “the falsity of a report.” “Falseness,” which is applied to persons, usually suggests blame, as “the falseness of a friend.”

Limit, limitation. — “Limit” in the sense of “boundary” (as “the limits of my estate,” “the limits of my patience,”) is preferable to “limitation,” since “limitation” means also either the act of limiting or a restriction, as “She chafes at the limitation of her freedom,” “His talent has its limitations.”

Narrative, narration. — “Narrative” in the sense of “that which is narrated” is preferable to “narration,” since “narration” means also either the act or the art of narrating: *e.g.* “‘The White Seal’ is an admirable narrative,” “In the narration of the story he grew eloquent,” “Macaulay is a master of narration.”

Negligence, neglect. — “Negligence” is the habit of leaving things undone, “neglect” is an instance of the habit.

¹ The Oxford English Dictionary.

Organism, organization. — An “organism” is a living body composed of a number of essential parts: *e.g.* “What a complex organism the human body is!” “Organization” denotes either the act of organizing or the body of persons organized: *e.g.* “The organization of the club was his work,” “Burke had great faith in political organizations.”

Produce, product, production. — “Produce” is always collective (we do not speak of “a produce”), and is used chiefly of raw material, as “the produce of the soil,” “the produce of the flock.” “Product,” though sometimes used in the sense of “produce,” usually denotes the result of some physical operation, as “a product of engineering skill.” “Production,” though sometimes used in the sense of “product,” properly means the act of producing, as “the production of wheat”; it is also applied to a work of literature or of art, as “a literary production.”

Recourse, resource, resort. — “Recourse” means a turning to some one or something for help or protection: *e.g.* “To secure sleep he had recourse to a narcotic.” “Resource” means that which affords help or support: *e.g.* “A small pension is her only resource,” “His pecuniary resources were large.” “Resort” is sometimes used in the sense of “recourse,” and sometimes in that of “resource”; but in its specific meaning it is usually restricted to the sense of “a place much frequented”: *e.g.* “Newport is a fashionable resort in August.”

Requirement, requisite, requisition. — A “requirement” is something prescribed by a person or by a body of persons: *e.g.* “The requirements for admission to college have increased since his day.” A “requisite” is something demanded by the nature of things: *e.g.* “The requisites for success in life are courage and good sense.” A “requisition” is an authoritative demand or an official request: *e.g.* “If Jones escapes to Texas, the governor of Arkansas will have to make a requisition for him.”

Sewage, sewerage. — “Sewage” is the contents, “sewerage” the system, of sewers: *e.g.* “The harbor receives the sewage of Boston,” “Under Spanish rule the sewerage of Havana was as bad as bad could be.”

Signification, significance. — “Signification” in the sense of “meaning” is preferable to “significance,” since “significance” is used also in the sense of “importance”: *e.g.* “The signification of the word is plain,” “This act has great significance.”

Site, situation. — The “site” of a building or of a city is the ground on which it is, has been, or is to be, placed: *e.g.* “Schliemann discovered the site of ancient Troy.” The “situation” of anything is its position in relation to its surroundings: *e.g.* “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion” (Psalms xlviii. 2).

Solicitation, solicitude. — “Solicitation” is persistent asking, importunity; “solicitude” is anxiety, concern. We may have great “solicitude” lest our “solicitations” may not prevail.

Substitution, substitute. — “Substitution” is the act of substituting; a “substitute” is the person or the thing substituted: *e.g.* “The substitution of John for James gave us the game,” “John was chosen as a substitute.”

Union, unity. — “Union” is either the joining of two or more things into one or the result of such joining; “unity” is oneness, harmony. We speak of the “union” of sweetness and strength in a character, of the “Trades Union,” of “the Union” (meaning the United States of America); of the “unity” of a literary or a musical composition, of political “unity.”

EXERCISE XXVIII

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each noun: —

Admittance, admission; ceremony, ceremonial; completion, completeness; council, counsel; cultivation, culture; deception, deceit;

emigration, immigration; enormity, enormousness; esteem, estimation, estimate; falsity, falseness; limit, limitation; narrative, narration; negligence, neglect; organism, organization; produce, product, production; recourse, resource, resort; requirement, requisite, requisition; sewage, sewerage; signification, significance; site, situation; solicitation, solicitude; substitution, substitute; union, unity.

EXERCISE XXIX

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the noun in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. What are the terms of admission (admittance)?
2. Do you like the ceremonial (ceremony)?
3. The completion (completeness) of this new dictionary will make scholars glad.
4. The counsel (council) was not wise.
5. Her deceit (deception) amazed me.
6. The government does not encourage immigration (emigration).
7. The people are gradually recognizing the enormity (enormousness) of the frauds of which they are the victims.
8. In Mr. Carpenter's estimate (estimation), the cost of timber and paint is low.
9. Do you call that falsity (falseness)?
10. He lent his brothers money without limit (limitation).
11. Which style of narrative (narration) do you prefer?
12. His death was caused by his own neglect (negligence).
13. What a queer organism (organization)!
14. He would tax all English produce (products, productions).
15. Wanted, a boy to do light work in a first-class store. Ability to read and write is a requirement (requisite).
16. That was my usual resort (resource).
17. The sewage (sewerage) of inland cities presents very difficult problems.
18. The site (situation) of the temple is not known.
19. His mother's solicitude (solicitation) induced him, when he was a boy, to give up his intention of going to sea.
20. The substitution (substitute) is wise.
21. Unity (union) of religious denominations is hoped for.

EXERCISE XXX

Insert in each blank the noun that expresses the exact meaning;¹ explain your choice:—

Admittance, admission

1. No — to this building except on business.
2. The requirements for — to Radcliffe College are the same as those for — to Harvard College.
3. — ten cents.

Ceremony, ceremonial

1. Cremation should certainly be made a —.
2. The coronation of King Edward was to have taken place in June, 1902, in Westminster Abbey. For four months previously all services were suspended in preparation for the —.
3. The Aztec worship was remarkable for its burdensome —.

Completion, completeness

1. The — of the railroad was celebrated by a general illumination.
2. We were surprised at the — of the collection of minerals.
3. We hope for the — of our new building by September.

Council, counsel

1. Listen to the judgments of wise men in —.
2. The prisoner asked permission to consult his —.
3. No man will take —, but every man will take money; therefore money is better than —.
4. The members of the President's cabinet form a secret —.

Cultivation, culture

1. He was an enthusiastic advocate for the — of the mind.
2. — is the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world.
3. The — of right relations with one's fellow-men is a duty.

Deception, deceit

1. He was guilty of a long course of —.
2. Her character would be charming if it were not for her —.
3. Gilding in architecture is no —.
4. Deceivers seldom profit by their —s.

¹ In some cases one noun or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Emigration, immigration ; emigrant, immigrant

1. The Chinese government encourages —.
2. — is one cause of the rapid growth of our population.
3. The — of the French nobility at the time of the French Revolution was a political blunder.
4. Among our —s are Poles and Germans.
5. A party of —s has just landed in New York.
6. The number of —s from Ireland is very large.

Enormity, enormousness

1. The — of the cost of the Civil War startled us.
2. Burke drew such a vivid picture of the — of the Nabob of Arcot's crimes that ladies in the audience fainted.
3. Visitors do not at first realize the — of St. Peter's, at Rome.

Esteem, estimation, estimate

1. Several plumbers have been asked to send in an — of the cost of heating the building.
2. We have always held him in high —.
3. In what — is he held by his townsmen?
4. In my —, she is the best of women.

Falsity, falseness

1. Arnold was despised for his —.
2. The — of his reasoning is evident.
3. The prince was betrayed through the — of his servant.

Limit, limitation

1. Will there ever be a — reached in the size of ocean steamers?
2. Athens insisted upon a — of the right to vote.
3. The prisoners were free to roam within certain —s, but their employments were subject to —.

Narrative, narration

1. The — awakened our interest at the start.
2. A — may move rapidly or slowly, but it must move.
3. Persons are in the habit of saying, "Anybody can write a —"; but in point of fact — is very difficult.

Negligence, neglect

1. Through —— of what ought to be done we acquire habits of ——.
2. Rescue my poor remains from vile ——.
3. The gate has fallen from its hinges, the wooden steps are rotted, and the house shows similar signs of ——.

Organism, organization

1. The color of the tree is due to minute ——s that incrust it.
2. Lieutenant Peary has completed the —— of his Arctic expedition.
3. The Jacobin Club was a political ——.

Produce, product, production

1. The manufacturer brought his —— to market.
2. The farmers carry their —— to the nearest railway station.
3. He is engaged in the —— of cotton.
4. Lowell's "Commemoration Ode" is a noble ——.

Recourse, resource, resort

1. The woods were her favorite ——.
2. When women engage in any art or trade, it is usually as a last ——.
3. The contest is against a party of extraordinary ——s.
4. General Lee had —— to stratagem.

Requirement, requisite, requisition

1. One of the ——s of great generalship is coolness.
2. The ——s for admission to college vary.
3. The wars of Napoleon were marked by the enormous ——s that were made on invaded countries.
4. That locomotive engineers be not color-blind is a just ——.

Sewage, sewerage

1. The water of rivers that have received —— is not good to drink.
2. The vast and intricate —— of Paris is described by Victor Hugo in "Les Misérables."
3. —— is necessary to the health of a city.

Signification, significance

1. The — of a word is not to be changed by any one person.
2. An act of apparently slight — often proves momentous.
3. To understand the true — of a race, we must consider it with regard to both its past and its future.

Site, situation

1. There are plenty of —s for building, but I shall not build yet.
2. Our school building has a pleasant —.
3. Has the — of Richard's house been fixed?

Solicitation, solicitude

1. His — for money and clothes was persistent.
2. My mother watched over my infancy with tender —.
3. Ccriolanus yielded at the — of his mother.

Substitution, substitute

1. I am not one of the regular team; I am a —.
2. The — of Jones for Brown was a wise move by the captain.
3. English is prescribed as a — for Greek.

Union, unity

1. In Bacon there was a singular — of audacity and sobriety.
2. How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in —!
3. This composition lacks —; it treats of unrelated subjects.

Nouns that are similar, but not identical, in meaning are sometimes confounded with one another.

I

Reference is made to the ring which Portia had given to Bassanio.

II

Allusion is made to the ring which Portia had given to Bassanio.

As the ring had been distinctly mentioned several times in the passage from which this sentence is taken, "reference" is the proper word; "allusion" merely points indirectly to something not explicitly mentioned. A similar distinction exists between the verbs "allude" and "refer."

I

Those saved remained on deck
the rest of the night.

II

Those saved remained on deck
the *balance*¹ of the night.

“Balance” properly means the difference between two sides of an account, as “I have still a balance at the bank”; it also means “a thing of equal influence, importance, or value,”² a counterpoise, as “If France, torn with civil strife, had ceased to be a balance to Spain, she found a new balance in Flanders” (J. R. Green); in the sense of “equilibrium,” it appears in the phrase “balance of power.” “Rest” means what remains of a given number or quantity; it is used of either persons or things, and of large as well as of small parts. “Remainder” differs from “rest” in that it is used of things only and denotes a comparatively small part: *e.g.* “The remainder of the dinner was soon disposed of.”

I

Mr. Smith is a talented young
clergyman from Philadelphia.

II

Mr. Smith is a talented young
divine from Philadelphia.

Divine in the sense of “clergyman” is no longer in good use. As a noun, the word now means “one skilled in divinity, a theologian,”² as “a learned divine.”

I

Dancing is an essential part of
a young woman’s education.

II

Dancing is an essential part of
a young *female*’s education.

Female as a synonym for “woman” is no longer used by good writers except as an expression of contempt. Formerly the word in this sense was in better repute, as readers of Miss Burney’s “Evelina” or of Scott’s “Abbot” are aware. At present, “female” is correctly used in contradistinction to “male.”

I

She jumped from the third
story of her house yesterday, and
broke one of her ankles.

II

She jumped from the third
story of her *home* yesterday, and
broke one of her ankles.

¹ See page 12.

² The Oxford English Dictionary.

A "home" is one's habitual abode, "the abiding-place of the affections"; a "house" is a building. A "home" may or may not be in a "house"; a "house" may or may not be a "home." The distinction between the two words appears in Byron's lines:—

He entered in his house — his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home.

I

We are here through divine
prompting and guidance.

II

We are here owing to divine
instigation and guidance.

"Instigation" has long been correctly used in the sense of "incitement to evil": *e.g.* "Chunda Sahib fell into the hands of the Mahrattas, and was put to death, at the instigation probably of his competitor Mahommed Ali" (Macaulay). Some modern writers of good standing use the word in a neutral sense; but in this sense it seems better to use a neutral word, like "instance" or "prompting," and to confine "instigation" to the old meaning. A similar remark applies to the noun "instigator" and to the verb "instigate."

I

The person in question entered,
his hands full of letters.

II

The *party*¹ in question entered,
his hands full of letters.

"Person" is correct, *party* incorrect; for the reference is to a man as an individual, not to a "party" of men or to one man considered as a "party" to a suit or to a legal document.

I

Four transatlantic steamships
were among the arrivals.

II

A *quartet* of transatlantic
steamships were among the
arrivals.

"Quartet" is properly used either of four persons who sing or play together a musical composition of four parts, or of the composition itself.

¹ See page 13.

I

The magazine was successful from the start.

II

The magazine was a *success* from the start.

According to the best present usage, it is proper to say that a magazine has "success," but not that it is a *success* or a *failure*. This form of speech is, however, so common that it may in time gain a footing in the language.

I

A carriage with two horses was driven rapidly round the corner.

II

A *team* with two horses was being driven rapidly round the corner.

Team is improperly used to mean, or to include, a vehicle. It properly means two or more animals working together. "Foot-ball team" is, therefore, correct.

I

Smoking is not permitted in this compartment unless all the passengers concur in allowing it.

II

Smoking is not permitted in this compartment unless *the whole* of the passengers concur.

The noun "whole," like the adjective, is properly used of that which is regarded as a unit, as in Montgomery's line,

'Tis not the whole of life to live;

it should never refer to individual persons or things. The adjective "all" may refer to individual persons or things, as in the sentence under I; or to the whole extent of a thing, as "all summer," "all the year round."

Discriminate between nouns that are similar in meaning.

EXERCISE XXXI

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each noun :—

Allusion, reference ; balance, rest, remainder ; divine, clergyman ; female, woman ; home, house ; instigation ; party, person ; quartet ; success ; team ; whole.

EXERCISE XXXII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the noun in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. He made jocose allusions (references) to the situation.
2. Mr. Howe is a well-known divine (clergyman).
3. Mr. Roscoe has no house (home).
4. The deed was done at his instigation (instance).
5. The hotel clerk says that he expects three more parties (persons) on the six o'clock train.
6. I lost a good team (carriage) by the accident.

EXERCISE XXXIII

Insert in each blank the noun that expresses the exact meaning ; ¹ explain your choice : —

Allusion, reference

1. His book is full of obscure ——s to authors not mentioned.
2. I must condense what I have to say in —— to my translation.
3. This Bible has marginal ——s to parallel passages.

Balance, rest, remainder

1. He will stay there for the —— of the season.
2. Democrats elect the —— of the ticket.
3. The account shows a —— of \$12.46.
4. The —— of the boys went home.

Divine, clergyman

1. Hooker was a learned ——.
2. The young ——, though ignorant, was devoted to his flock.

Female, woman

1. In most species the male is larger, in some few the ——.
2. This work was performed by a ——.
3. He and the —— were sitting together in the dining-room.

¹ In some cases one noun or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Home, house

1. The — of Colonel Hooks was blown up by dynamite.
2. Mr. Sole owns a beautiful — and has a happy —.
3. His new — will be finished in November.

Instigation, instance, prompting

1. At the — of his friends, he gave much to charity.
2. At the — of these wicked men, the people armed themselves.
3. At Lucy's —, he asked Mrs. Ferrars's forgiveness.
4. This foul deed was done at the —, if not by the personal order, of his step-mother.

Party, person

1. A cross-looking — alighted from the stage-coach.
2. He was an important — to the suit.
3. Who was that fat old — who kept us all laughing?

Team, vehicle

1. In which — did you come?
2. Mr. Patch drives a good —.
3. I left the — at the door loaded with trunks.

The whole, all

1. They feel that — (of) the instructors are against them.
2. We sold — (of) our apples at sixty cents a bushel.

Other nouns sometimes confounded with one another because of a resemblance in meaning are : —

Ability, capacity. — “Ability” is the power to do, “capacity” the power to acquire. A boy may have unusual “capacity” for the acquisition of knowledge without having unusual “ability” to make use of his knowledge.

Argument, plea. — In a legal sense, “argument” is properly used of an advocate's speech at a trial, “plea” of the pleadings before a trial : *e.g.* “This is not a convincing argument,” “He filed a plea to the jurisdiction.” An “argument” may be addressed either to the court or to the

jury; a "plea" is always addressed to the court. Similar distinctions exist between the verbs "argue" and "plead."

Centre, middle. — The "centre" is a point or a definite place; the "middle" is a line or a space, and is less definite than the "centre." We speak of the "centre" of a circle, of the "middle" of the road, the "middle" of the night.

Character, reputation. — "Character" represents what a person is in himself, "reputation" what he is to others: *e.g.* "Washington's noble character gave him a world-wide reputation."

Custom, habit. — "Custom" denotes the frequent repetition of the same act; "habit" is the effect of custom: *e.g.* "The custom of smoking one cigarette a day leads to a habit which is hard to break." "Custom" is voluntary; "habit" is involuntary, often uncontrollable, sometimes unconscious.

Dock, wharf. — A "dock" is an artificial basin into which vessels are admitted for lading or unlading, or for repairs; a "wharf" is a platform built out from the shore. Ships may come into "docks" or come to "wharves."

Episode, event. — Properly used, "episode" means something outside of the course of the narrative, an incidental occurrence. Trollope so uses it when he writes: "There should be no *episodes* in a novel. Every sentence, every word, through all those pages, should tend to the telling of the story." An "event" is any occurrence, especially one of importance: *e.g.* "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary," etc. (Declaration of Independence).

Gravity, weight. — We speak of the "gravity" of an offence, of a situation, of a person's countenance or conduct, but of the "weight" of a burden. "Gravity" is rarely used in a physical sense, except in the phrases "centre of gravity," "specific gravity."

Invention, discovery. — “Invention” means the contrivance of something new, and also the thing contrived; “discovery” means the finding of something that existed before but was unknown, and also the thing found. We speak of the “invention” of machinery, of the “discovery” of a comet. There is a similar distinction between the verbs “invent” and “discover.”

Majority, bulk. — When number is spoken of, either “majority” or “most” is preferable to “bulk,” which properly refers to size or volume: *e.g.* “The will of the majority of voters should prevail,” “She will have the bulk of my fortune at my death.”

Majority, plurality. — A “majority” of votes is more than half the whole number polled; a “plurality” is the excess of votes given for one candidate as compared with those given for another. Thus, if *A* has 21 votes, *B* 8, and *C* 10, *A* is elected by a “majority”; but if *A* has 21 votes, *B* 18, and *C* 10, *A* is elected by a “plurality.”

Part, portion, percentage. — A “part” is something less than the whole: *e.g.* “I have read a part of the story.” “Portion,” which, as the Century Dictionary says, “is often used in a stilted way where *part* would be simpler and better,” properly means a part allotted or assigned, a share: *e.g.* “Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me” (Luke xv. 12). “Percentage” is often incorrectly used to mean any part of a number, as “A large *percentage* of the fleet sailed to-day”; it properly means a proportion stated in hundredths, as “The *percentage* of the insane to the whole population is increasing.”

Plenty, abundance. — These words are often treated as if they were identical in meaning; but by careful writers “plenty” is used to mean enough, “abundance” more than enough. A similar distinction exists between the adjectives “plentiful” and “abundant.”

Quantity, number, amount. — “Quantity” is used of things that are measured, “number” of things that are

counted: *e.g.* "There was a large quantity of water in the tank," "There is a larger number of buildings in New York than in Chicago." "Amount," which means sum total, is used of either numbers or quantities: *e.g.* "The amount of the numbers so added is 5270," "He has a large amount of money."

Series, succession. — "Series" implies that the things spoken of form, as it were, parts of one whole, as "a series of books on American history." "Succession" implies that one person or thing follows another in order of time or of place, as "a succession of callers," "a succession of crops," "a succession of statues in a gallery." The distinction between the two words is often disregarded.

Statement, assertion. — A "statement" is the expression in formal language of facts or opinions, a setting down in detail of particulars; an "assertion" is an affirmation of facts or opinions, or an insistence on a right or a claim. A man makes a "statement" of the reasons why a given proposition is true, an "assertion" that it is true; a bank makes a "statement" of its assets, a depositor makes an "assertion" that he has so much money in the bank, an "assertion" of his rights as a depositor. A similar distinction exists between the verbs "state" and "assert."

Verdict, testimony. — A "verdict" is the conclusion reached by a jury, or by a number of men acting, or thought of as acting, as a jury: *e.g.* "He was condemned by the verdict of the public." "Testimony" is evidence bearing on a question; it may be given by either persons or things: *e.g.* "The testimony of all the witnesses was to the same effect," "In these scratches on the rock there is testimony to the existence of an ice age."

Verse, stanza. — A "verse" of poetry is "a line consisting of a certain number of metrical feet disposed according to metrical rules."¹ A "stanza" is composed of several verses.

¹ Webster's International Dictionary.

EXERCISE XXXIV

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each noun : —

Ability, capacity; argument, plea; centre, middle; character, reputation; custom, habit; dock, wharf; episode, event; gravity, weight; invention, discovery; majority, bulk; majority, plurality; part, portion, percentage; plenty, abundance; quantity, number, amount; series, succession; statement, assertion; verdict, testimony; verse, stanza.

EXERCISE XXXV

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the noun in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. He is a person of great ability (capacity).
2. He wasted no words in his argument (plea).
3. Are you sure that this is the centre (middle) of the room?
4. A good character (reputation) is a precious possession.
5. The dock (wharf) will be completed in June.
6. The story contains many interesting episodes (events).
7. It is something of great weight (gravity).
8. This is a remarkable discovery (invention).
9. Calhoun was nominated by a majority (plurality).
10. A small part (percentage) of the class wore gowns.
11. The expedition has plenty (an abundance) of provisions.
12. He published his books in a series (succession).
13. This assertion (statement) throws new light on the matter.
14. What was their verdict (testimony)?
15. Please read the first verse (stanza).

EXERCISE XXXVI

Insert in each blank the noun that expresses the exact meaning; ¹ explain your choice : —

Ability, capacity

1. They gave, each according to his —.
2. He has — to master Greek, but not — to work persistently.

¹ In some cases one noun or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Argument, plea

1. Every whisper in the court-room was hushed as Mr. New rose before the jury and began his — in behalf of the prisoner.
2. The — of Smith, when arraigned before the court, was that he had acted in self-defence.
3. There are —s for and —s against trial by jury.

Centre, middle

1. There is a crack running down the — of the wall.
2. The arrow struck the — of the target.
3. He parts his hair in the —.

Character, reputation

1. The outlaws of Yorkshire were men of loose —.
2. A general may lose his — through a single blunder.
3. A — for cleverness is easily won in our village.

Custom, habit

1. Dancing round a Maypole is a — many hundred years old.
2. Those national —s are best which lead to good —s among the people.

Dock, wharf

1. The — may run dry while the ship is under repairs.
2. Near the town a — of wood runs out to a great distance.
3. He meant to make a wet — to hold two hundred ships.

Episode, event

1. The didactic character of the Georgics made it necessary that they should be enlivened by —s.
2. Her affection was awakened by the — of the morning.
3. He wrote on one of the romantic —s in the history of the crusades.

Gravity, weight

1. They probably do not realize the — of the question.
2. The — of lead is greater than that of feathers.
3. The — of the present political situation should impress all serious-minded persons.

Invention, discovery

1. The — of the properties of the magnetic needle is said to have been made by the Chinese; also the — of gunpowder.
2. The — of the circulation of blood was made by Harvey.
3. The steam-engine is one of the greatest —s of this age.

Majority, bulk

1. The — of the twenty-one holders of fellowships for that year are now engaged in teaching.
2. The great — of the English laity are faithful to the principles of the Reformation.
3. He has paid the — of his debt, for the — of his creditors have been lenient.

Majority, plurality

1. Smith had 37 of the 52 votes, a good —.
2. Jones had 20 votes, Smith 14, and Brown 11; Jones therefore was elected by a safe —.
3. If Hart receives 5000 votes, Murray 4000, and Lane 3000, no one has a —, but Hart is elected over Murray by a — of 1000.

Part, portion, percentage

1. The manager took for his services a — of the gross receipts.
2. A — of my work is done.
3. The priests had a — of land assigned them by Pharaoh.
4. The — of college graduates in Massachusetts, in proportion to the population of the state, is very large.

Plenty, abundance

1. If you do not waste your money, you will have — for your expenses.
2. They did cast in of their —; but she of her want.
3. Last year there was — of corn; we had enough to feed the whole nation for two years.

Quantity, number, amount

1. Our monthly expenditures vary in —.
2. You could see any — of cabs standing in front of the theatre.
3. A large — of books and papers covered the table.
4. Gulliver asked the king of Lilliput for a large — of iron bars and a considerable — of rope.

Series, succession

1. The — of his ideas was now rapid.
2. The "English Men of Letters" is a — of books worth reading.
3. The foundation of his fortune was laid in a — of good crops.

Statement, assertion

1. I should like an exact — in writing of your reasons for this step.
2. His — that he was in Chicago in August was false.
3. The Declaration of Independence contains a — of grievances.

Verdict, testimony

1. The — of history is that Christianity has improved the condition of women.
2. Let us await the — of the public.
3. The — of those who saw the accident was contradictory.

Verse, stanza

1. Scan that — once more.
2. We will sing hymn twenty-nine, omitting the second —.
3. The poem is written in —s of four —s each.

Some nouns are misused so often and in so many ways that their correct meanings are obscured or lost sight of altogether:—

I

That sunbeam played a great
part in the landscape.

II

That sunbeam was a mighty
factor in the landscape.

"Factor" is a pet word with young writers, who use it without a distinct idea of its meaning. In mathematics, a factor is one of two or more numbers which, when multiplied together, produce another number. In a figurative sense, a factor is one of two or more elements that tend to produce a given result: *e.g.* "The first factor in the making of a nation is its religion" ¹ (Gladstone).

I

Abundant leisure is a striking
circumstance of his life.

II

Abundant leisure is a striking
feature of his life.

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

“Feature” is put to many and vague uses. In its literal sense, the word, which was formerly used of parts of the body, is now confined to the lineaments of the face, as “Her features are regular”; in its figurative sense, it properly means a noticeable part of anything, as “No feature of the landscape was too prominent.”

I

These meals are curiously solemn affairs.

II

These meals are curiously solemn *functions*.

“Function” is correctly used (1) of the special kind of activity that is proper to anything,—as “the functions of the nerves,”—or that is proper to a person in a particular office or station, as “the functions of a mayor”; (2) of a religious ceremony, as “In great functions the pope wears a cross at his breast.” Within the last two generations, “function” in the second sense has been extended to mean a festivity of importance; nowadays it figures with wearisome frequency in reports of petty social affairs.

I

The jack-rabbit, a creature peculiar to the prairie, gives the settlers’ dogs plenty of exercise.

II

The jack-rabbit is a prairie *institution* that gives the settlers’ dogs plenty of exercise.

“Institution,” which is frequently used as a vague term for almost anything, from a bicycle to a “jack-rabbit,” may well be restricted to things instituted or established, as “an institution for the blind.”

I

I have a great many friends in Cambridge.

II

I have *lots* of friends in Cambridge.

The use of *lot* exemplified by the sentence under II is common in conversation, but has not yet secured a footing in literature. In serious writing, “lot” means either a number of things taken collectively or a separate part of a whole: *e.g.* “This lot of shoes is damaged,” “This lot of land is for sale.”

I

I remember two fields of their activity, — the stock-exchange and the senate-chamber.

II

I remember two *phases* of their work, — the stock-exchange and the senate-chamber.

“Phase” was originally applied to the regularly recurring appearances of the moon or the planets; it was then extended to aspects of other objects (presented either to the eye or to the mind) that appear different at different times or from different points of view. The word is correctly used in the title of Lord Rosebery’s book, “Napoleon; the Last Phase,” and in the sentence “The Chinese question has passed through many phases.”

I

They moved with the swing that comes from length of limb.

II

They moved with the *scope* that comes from length of limb.

“Scope,” from a Greek word signifying aim or mark, is properly used to mean (1) aim, purpose, end in view, and (2) room for action, liberty. For example:—

Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not, or forbid. — MILTON.¹

The sole secret of getting through this life with anything like contentment is to have full scope for the development of one’s faculties.
— HUXLEY.

I

That the workingman has so far realized his advantages is evidence of his intelligence.

II

That the workingman has so far realized his advantages is a *tribute* to his intelligence.

“Tribute” properly means something due, as (literally) an impost, (figuratively) a mark of devotion, gratitude, or respect. In the sentence under II, the fact that the workingman has realized his advantages is not something due or paid to his intelligence, but is evidence that goes to prove that he has intelligence. Examples of the correct use of “tribute” are:—

¹ Quoted in the Century Dictionary.

Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute. — C. C. PINCKNEY.

Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,

Not as a fee. — SHAKSPERE.¹

Use nouns in their specific meanings.

EXERCISE XXXVII

Tell why each noun within quotation-marks is correctly used : —

1. He really understands the problem before him, and the people who are the . . . human "factors" in that problem. — THE SPECTATOR [19th century].

2. 'Tenderness for animals is no unusual "feature" in either the real or the legendary portraits of holy men. — E. A. FREEMAN.

3. Mr. Lincoln had not been chosen as general agent of an anti-slavery society, but President of the United States, to perform certain "functions" exactly defined by law. — LOWELL.

4. The pillory was a flourishing and popular "institution" in those days. — THACKERAY.

5. The homestead law exempts the "lot" of ground and the buildings thereon occupied as a residence. — AMERICAN NEWSPAPER.

6. What I relished most was the long talks I had with them about authorship in all its "phases." — HOWELLS.

7. The President holds that Aguinaldo's case comes within the "scope" of the amnesty proclamation. — AMERICAN NEWSPAPER.

8. Complaint is the largest "tribute" heaven receives. — SWIFT.

EXERCISE XXXVIII

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each noun : —

Factor, feature, function, institution, lot, phase, scope, tribute.

EXERCISE XXXIX

Tell why each italicized noun is misused ; substitute for each a better expression : —

1. *Lots* of things were, of course, said about realism.

2. This hammock is a great *institution*.

¹ The Merchant of Venice, iv. 1.

3. The popularity and influence of the book speedily made it a *factor* in the advancement of the anti-slavery cause.
4. A *lot* of international amity has thus arisen.
5. The building is to have a library, a restaurant, a large room for student meetings, and other *features*.
6. One *phase* of the meeting was a speech by Senator Howard.
7. So large a gift is a *tribute* to the giver's generosity.
8. Miss Cole's small afternoon tea was a delightful *function*.
9. There's too much *scope* for the sunshine on the lawn.

Would-be Nouns.—Pedants sometimes revive extinct nouns, and “ready writers” invent nouns or adopt the inventions of others.

I

Admiral Dewey has coal enough to make him independent of the coal combination all winter.

II

Admiral Dewey has coal enough to make him independent of the coal *combine* all winter.

There is no necessity, and there can be no excuse, for using *combine* instead of “combination.” It is found in some old writers; but it had been long out of use when it was revived, in 1886, at the trial of a New York alderman for bribery. It now appears in the columns of British newspapers which at first stigmatized it as “an Americanism.”

I

The general had received greetings by cable from the “comrades” in Australasia and America.

Send me a telegram to let me know of your arrival.

It came by the last freight train.

II

The general had received *cables* of greeting from the “comrades” in Australasia and America.

Send me a *wire* to let me know of your arrival.

It came by the last *freight*.

Cable in the sense of “message by cable,” *wire* in that of “telegram,” and *freight* in that of “freight train” are often used in conversation and sometimes in print; but they have not yet made their way into the literary language.

I

A dispatch has been received from America.

"Telegram,"¹ though objected to at first as an irregular formation, has established itself in the language as a convenient word; and *cablegram*, though of still more irregular formation, may yet establish itself.

II

A *cablegram* has been received from America.

I

This was a terrible disappointment.

You have no appetite to-day.

I was fitted for college in a Maine school.

The list of invitations was long.

He has been decoyed by a tempting rise in salary.

To protect buyers from deception, the name is woven at each repetition of the pattern.

II

This was a terrible *disappoint*.

You are off your *feed* to-day.

My *fit* was in a Maine school.

The list of *invites* was long.

He has been decoyed by a tempting *raise* in salary.

To protect buyers from deception, the name is woven at each *repeat* of the pattern.

The use as nouns of the verbs *disappoint*, *feed*, *fit*, *invite*, *raise*, *repeat*, is indefensible, especially since most of the verbs named have corresponding nouns in good use.

I

He was one of the most industrious collegians.

Fried human beings were plentiful this hot week.

Collegiate and *human* were once nouns, but are now properly adjectives only.

II

He was one of the most industrious *collegiates*.

Fried *humans* were plentiful this hot week.

I

I take a constitutional walk every day.

II

I take a *constitutional* every day.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary the use of *constitutional* as a substantive in the sense of "constitu-

¹ See page 13.

tional walk" "originated at the English universities." The word in this sense is in colloquial use in American as well as in English universities, and also in general society; but it is not yet established in the literary language.

I

Another horse has been killed by an electric car.

It is said that four new optional courses will be offered.

I sent you a postal card to-day.

Electric, optional, postal, as nouns, though often heard and seen, are not sanctioned by the best usage.

II

Another horse has been killed by an *electric*.

It is said that four new *option-als* will be offered.

I sent you a *postal* to-day.

I

Mr. Bennett thinks that an editorial article [*or* a leader] is the highest kind of composition known.

An elective course in foot-ball ought to be offered by the college.

Considerations of economy should have great weight, as Governor Wolcott said in his inaugural address.

II

Mr. Bennett thinks that "an *editorial*" is the highest kind of composition known.

An *elective* in foot-ball ought to be offered by the college.

Considerations of economy should have great weight, as Governor Wolcott noted in his *inaugural*.

Editorial, elective (which in an educational sense is unknown in England), and *inaugural* are so convenient as nouns that they may in time be accepted, as many other adjectives have been.

One use of adjectives as nouns is always justifiable: —

How are the mighty fallen! — 2 SAMUEL i. 25.

The good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. — WORDSWORTH.

The cold in clime are cold in blood. — BYRON.

Not only may adjectives be treated as nouns when they are used as general terms (as in the passages just cited), but

many adjectives become nouns and take the plural inflection. One of the means, indeed, by which a language grows is through the extension of a word from one part of speech to another. Thus "circular," originally a part of the phrase "circular letter," is now properly used as a noun. So, too, are "disagreeables," "domestic," "eatables," "equal," "essential," "extreme," "inferior," "interior," "superior," "valuables," and many other words that were once adjectives only. "The open," which is frequently used by good authors,—as "to sleep in the open," "to sail into the open,"—is a short way of designating the open air, the open sea. Any word may, of course, be used as a noun if it is quoted: *e.g.* "She was more nearly in love with Weston Marchmont than with anybody else. But the 'nearly' had never become the 'quite'" (Anthony Hope).

I

Men should know that drinking-fountains are a better preventive of rabies than muzzles are.

II

Men should know that drinking-fountains are a better *preventative* of rabies than muzzles are.

Preventative, though frequently used in conversation and sometimes in print, is not a real word; "preventive" is the proper expression.

Choose nouns in good use rather than obsolete or upstart nouns.

EXERCISE XL

If any italicized word is not in good use as a noun, substitute a better expression:—

1. There will be no Harvard and Tech *combine*.
2. Humility is much more tried by *equals* than it is by inferiors.
3. I have myself suffered unspeakably in the *electrics*.
4. I shall get a *raise* if there's one to be got.
5. The effect of the potion was to change the appearance of the head from that of a *human* to that of a beast.
6. I became a doctor as well as if I had been a regular *collegiate*.

7. No *postals* will be answered.
8. I want to have letters written before I shall be plunged into that boiling pot of *disagreeables* which I constantly expect at Honolulu.
9. Camphor is a *preventative* of moths.
10. The pinch in the matter of *eatables* lasted for a little while only.
11. Horses get one *feed* of steamed food per day.
12. How many *electives* have you this year?
13. I read it in President McKinley's last *inaugural*.
14. They had abandoned their tents and were living in the *open*.
15. I can't go on the next train, for that is a *freight*.
16. This came from an *editorial* in the Herald.
17. I have an *invite* to a spread at Memorial Hall.
18. I am going for a *constitutional*.
19. All my *valuables* are in that trunk.
20. Be sure to send a *cable* when you reach London.

CHAPTER V

PRONOUNS

IN the use of pronouns, the possibilities of error are so many and so varied that few writers succeed in securing absolute correctness and uniform clearness.

Vulgarisms. — Some blunders in the use of pronouns are, or should be, confined to the illiterate.

I

This book is yours.

The infant cried and disturbed
its mother.

II

This book is *your's*.

The infant cried and disturbed
it's mother.

No apostrophe should be used in forming the possessive case of a personal pronoun. "Ours," "yours," "hers," "theirs," "its,"¹ are correct. "It's" is in good use as a contraction for "it is."

I

He was one who was always
ready to give his advice.

It is impossible for me to hold
both of them.

II

He was one *as* was always
ready to give his advice.

It is impossible for me to hold
the two of them.

The use of *as* for "who," and of the noun-phrase *the two* for the pronoun "both," is common among the illiterate.

I

I will accept that as courage
which [*or* accept as courage
what] I regarded as arrogance.

II

I will accept that as courage
what I regarded as arrogance.

¹ The Oxford English Dictionary says of "its": "Formed in end of 16th century from *It* + 's of the possessive or genitive case, and at first commonly written *it's*, a spelling retained by some to the beginning of the 19th century."

In the sentence under II, *what* is equivalent to "that which"; but no one would write, "I accept that as courage *that which* I regarded as arrogance."

I

What does he want here?

II

Whatever does he want here?

Whatever is used interrogatively by the illiterate only. It is the proper word in "Whatever is, is right."

Avoid vulgarisms in the use of pronouns.

EXERCISE XLI

Write from dictation: —

1. Since you're the visitor, the choice is yours.
2. The bear was lying on its side, dead.
3. The Browns' house is larger than ours, but ours is pleasanter than theirs.
4. Show Mary your doll; it should not grieve you that yours is not so pretty as hers.
5. "It's mine," said the small girl, crossly, "and if I break its head, what business is it of yours?"

EXERCISE XLII

In place of any vulgarisms, substitute expressions that are in reputable use: —

1. Good people ashore wonder whatever sailors do with their time.
2. I don't know where you're going to find the nation as moves.
3. That tree what grows on the lawn is a magnolia.
4. That's he as lives in the great stone house.
5. You don't need the two of them.

Nominative or Objective? — There are now but seven English words that have one form for the nominative case and another for the objective; these seven are the pronouns "I," "thou," "he," "she," "we," "they," and "who" (with its compounds "whoever" and "whosoever").

I

Others have seen them, I believe, as well as I.

The Carbottle people were quite as badly off as we.

I will not learn my duty from such as thou.¹

They were both somewhat taller than she.

II

Other people have seen them, I believe, as well as *me*.

The Carbottle people were quite as badly off as *us*.

I will not learn my duty from such as *thee*.¹

They were both somewhat taller than *her*.

“I,” “we,” “thou,” and “she” are correct; for each is the subject of a finite verb understood. In elliptical sentences like these, the meaning may turn on the case of a pronoun. Thus, in the sentence “I like you better than he,” the last pronoun is the subject of a verb understood; in the sentence “I like you better than him,” it is the object of a verb understood.

I

Another fellow, probably he who had remained to search the captain's body, came to the door.

II

Another fellow, probably *him* who had remained to search the captain's body, came to the door.

Him is incorrect; for the pronoun in question is in apposition with “fellow,” the subject of the verb “came.”

I

He looked sharply over, and called out to know if it was I.

If any man is to blame, it's not he.

It never entered my head that it could be they.

II

He looked sharply over and called out to know if it was *me*.²

If there's any man to blame, it's not *him*.

It never entered my head that it could be *them*.

In each of these examples, the pronoun in question is properly a predicate nominative after some form of the verb “be.”

¹ Quakers use “thee” where others use “thou.”

² In England, “It is me” is used and defended by many educated persons; in the United States, “It is I” is preferred.

I

It was supposed to be *he*.
We believe it to have been *him*.

II

It was supposed to be *him*.
We believe it to have been *he*.

If we bear in mind that the verb "be" takes the same case after it as before it, we may, by determining the case of the first pronoun, easily determine that of the second. In the first example, since the infinitive has no subject of its own, the pronoun after the infinitive must be in the same case as the subject of "was supposed," — that is, the nominative; "he" is, then, correct, as it would be in the sentence "It was he." In the second example, since the infinitive has a subject of its own (namely, "it"), the pronoun after the infinitive must be in the same case as that subject, — that is, the objective; "him" is, then, correct, as is plain if we remodel the sentence so as to put in place of "it" a pronoun that has a distinctive form for the objective, as "We believe him to have been her in disguise."

I

His face bore an expression of exalted courage, the majesty of him who dares give his life.

II

His face bore an expression of exalted courage, the majesty of *he* who dares give his life.

He is incorrect, for the pronoun in question is the object of the preposition "of."

I

It will give my sister and me great pleasure to see you here.

Between you and me, I don't think he knows anything about it.

The conversations between Cox, Atherton, and him are prosaic.

II

It will give my sister and *I* great pleasure to see you here.

Between you and *I*,¹ I don't think he knows anything about it.

The conversations between Cox, Atherton, and *he* are prosaic.

A person who would never be guilty of saying "give *I*" directly may commit precisely the same fault if the

¹ "A great many young ladies of my acquaintance," says a recent American writer, "do not know the difference between 'you and I' and 'you and me.' I constantly hear them saying, 'He brought you and *I* a bouquet,' or 'You and *me* are invited to tea this evening.'"

troublesome pronoun is separated by one or more words from the governing verb or preposition.

I

He was put through college by an uncle for whom he had a strong dislike, and who, he said, treated him like a dog.

Then appeared another prisoner, who, he felt at once, could be no other than the man he was looking for.

II

He was put through college by an uncle for whom he had a strong dislike, and *whom*, he said, treated him like a dog.

Then appeared another prisoner, *whom*, he felt at once, could be no other than the man he was looking for.

Errors in the use of relative pronouns, like those in the sentences under II, are often caused by a half-conscious attempt to fit the case of the pronoun to the nearest verb. A little thought shows that in each of these examples the relative in question is not the object, but the subject, of a verb.

I

He is a man who, I know, is honest.

He is a man whom I know to be honest.

II

He is a man *whom* I know is honest.

He is a man *who* I know to be honest.

In the first example, "who" is correct, for it is the subject of the finite verb "is"; in the second, "whom" is correct, for it is the subject of the infinitive "to be."¹

I

Who could that be but Rose?

The proper construction of this sentence will be readily seen if the words in it are arranged thus: "That could be who but Rose?" "Who" is a predicate nominative after "could be."

II

Whom could that be but Rose?

I

If there should be a mistake as to who is to take down whom, it would be amusing.

Whom do you take me for?

II

If there should be a mistake as to who is to take down *who*, it would be amusing.

Who do you take me for?

¹ See page 110.

In the first example, the pronoun in question is the object of a verb, in the second of a preposition.

To the general rules governing the choice between the nominative case and the objective the use of "than whom" is an apparent exception. No careful author would write, "There never was a more virtuous or a more amiable man than him"; but Landor says, "I am highly gratified by your commendation of Cowper, than whom there never was a more virtuous or more amiable man." This difference in usage is sometimes accounted for on the theory that with "whom" "than" serves as a preposition, with other pronouns as a conjunction. However this may be, few good writers say "than who"; but many—Shakspeare, Milton, Pope, Byron, and Thackeray, for example,—write "than whom." In the hands of a young writer, either "than whom" or "than who" is likely to be harsh or clumsy.

I

The disturbed money-markets
bear resentment toward whoever
[or any one who] breaks the peace.

II

The disturbed money-markets
bear resentment toward *whomever*
breaks the peace.

In the sentence under II, *whomever* is incorrect, for the pronoun in question is not the object of "toward," but the subject of "breaks"; the whole clause is the object of "toward." On the other hand, in the sentence "There is a movement to get the party to nominate whomever the Labor party nominates," "whomever" is correct; for the pronoun is not the subject, but the object, of the verb in the last clause. "Any one who" is less formal than "whoever."

Use the nominative case of a pronoun as the subject of a finite verb, in apposition with a nominative, or as a predicate nominative after "be."

Use the objective case of a pronoun as the object of a finite verb or a preposition, as the subject of an infinitive, or as a predicate objective after the infinitive of "be" if that infinitive has a subject of its own.

Pronouns in “-self.” — Compound personal pronouns ending in “-self” are carelessly used by many inexperienced writers and by some authors of note. A pronoun of this class may properly be used either in a reflexive or in an intensive sense. In a reflexive sense it refers to the subject of the clause in which it stands, as “I struck myself with the bat,” “He talks to himself”; in an intensive sense it emphasizes the pronoun which it accompanies, as “He himself has said it,” “You have done so yourself.”

I

Louis, fearing that the Hungarian may disclose something harmful to him, sends him to the gallows.

He doubted whether Cromwell actually bore good-will either to his father or to him.

In each of the sentences under II, *himself* refers grammatically to the subject of the clause in which it stands, whereas the meaning requires that it should refer to the subject of the main clause.

In verse, the simple personal pronoun is often used reflexively.¹ For example: —

Now I lay me down to sleep.

Then peevishly she flung her on her face. — KINGSLEY.

He who hath bent him o’er the dead. — BYRON.

Occasionally, too, the simple personal pronoun is used reflexively in prose, as “The young prince took upon him the obligations” (Scott).

I

I myself, and several other senators, objected to the plan.

By what painful efforts he succeeded in getting out of debt, he himself only knows.

II

Myself, and several other senators, objected to the plan.

By what painful efforts he succeeded in getting out of debt, *himself* only knows.

¹ This use of the simple personal pronoun was frequent in early English.

When, as in these examples, the pronoun in “-self” serves to emphasize the subject of a verb, the corresponding simple personal pronoun (or a noun) is usually joined with it.

I

One day a number of other boys and I went swimming.

They say that there is to be a play, and that you are to be the principal actor.

II

One day a number of other boys and *myself* went swimming.

They say that there is to be a play, and that *yourself* is to be the principal actor.

Unless emphasis is particularly desirable, it is better, as in the sentences under I, to use the simple personal pronoun alone: *e.g.* “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua xxiv. 15). With pronouns, as with other parts of speech, a poet may take liberties; but Milton’s “myself am hell” should not be imitated in prose.

I

The purchaser of the volume was I [*or* I was the purchaser of the volume].

She left it to him to recollect that Mrs. Smith was not the only widow in Bath.

He belonged to the same denomination as they.

II

The purchaser of the volume was *myself*.

She left it to *himself* to recollect that Mrs. Smith was not the only widow in Bath.

He belonged to the same denomination as *themselves*.

The use of the intensive pronoun alone in the predicate position is too common among good writers to be absolutely condemned; but usually the simple personal pronoun is preferable.

Occasionally, however, when the same pronoun occurs so many times in a sentence as to render the meaning obscure, the pronoun in “-self” may properly be used alone: *e.g.* “It became intolerable to her [the Princess Osra] to suppose that the smith desired the Countess, and had lied in what he said about herself, making a tool of her.” In this sentence, if “her” were used instead of

"herself," it would probably be supposed to refer to the Countess, whereas it really refers to the Princess Osra, who is represented also by the succeeding "her."

Writers who pay attention to euphony rarely couple the emphatic "myself" with the objective "me," "herself" with "her," "himself" with "him," "themselves" with "them," unless some words intervene between the two pronouns, as in "Let me do it myself." In the second sentence under II in the last group of examples, "She left it to him himself" would be intolerable.

Use a pronoun in "-self" reflexively without another pronoun; intensively with another pronoun, as a rule.

EXERCISE XLIII

Explain the use of each pronoun within quotation-marks; point out any form that is peculiar to poetry or to an archaic style:—

1. Woe be to "whoever" brings anything in the shape of a stick this way! — BROWNING.
2. He had fire enough in "himself," but his pen seems to have been a non-conductor between it and his personages. — LOWELL.
3. He found "him" ¹ in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb. — KEATS.
4. "Myself" will to my darling be
Both law and impulse. — WORDSWORTH.
5. May maledictions fall and blast
"Thyself" and lineage! — LONGFELLOW.
6. He bears "him" like a portly gentleman. — SHAKSPERE.²
7. Let them come "themselves" and fetch us out. — ACTS xvi. 37.
8. Will you prepare "you" for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer. — SHAKSPERE.³
9. Who gives "himself" with his alms feeds three,
"Himself," his hungering neighbor, and me. — LOWELL.
10. He was not merely a chip of the old block, but the old block
"itself." — BURKE.

¹ "He" and "him" represent the same person.

² Romeo and Juliet, i. 5.

³ The Merchant of Venice, ii. 4.

EXERCISE XLIV

Insert in each blank the proper form of pronoun ;¹ give the reason for your choice :—

I, me, myself, I myself

1. The world will forgive such poor things as you and —.
2. Let you and — be together the next two months.
3. Will you go to the concert Friday with mother and —?
4. I forgot — and spoke impatiently.
5. This is between you and — and the town pump.
6. The two Smiths and — were always at those dreary meals.
7. You have done better than —.
8. As for —, I don't know what I have to do with it.
9. Though I was as bad as he, you blamed him more than —.
10. To send — away, and for a whole year, too, —, who had never been away from home, was not easy for mother.
11. Would you go, if you were —?
12. We shall soon see which is the better boxer, you or —.
13. "Whom did he call?"
"Only —."
14. "Who rang the bell?"
"Only —."
15. She knew it to be — by my gait.
16. It is said to be —.
17. I think that is for — to decide.

We, us, ourselves, we ourselves

1. It may have been — whom you saw.
2. — boys are having a good time.
3. Have you seen the picture of — three girls in a boat?
4. There are five hundred miles between father and —.
5. They as well as — were disappointed.
6. — ought not to get angry when others criticize — for faults which — freely acknowledge.
7. Let — ask — the reason for this falling-off.
8. The persons in the boat were supposed to be —.
9. They supposed the persons in the boat to be —.

¹ In some cases one form or another may be used, according to the meaning or the emphasis intended ; in some, a verb may be supplied with the pronoun.

You, yourself, you yourself

1. I don't believe that even — can realize what the difference is.
2. He plays very well, but scarcely so well as —.
3. Men like — cannot afford to take such risks.
4. You are wearing — out needlessly.
5. "You don't mean that you want me?"
"—, no other."

He, him, himself, he himself

1. It was on my lips to ask, "Why could it never have been —?"
2. She left it to — to remember all that she had done for —.
3. It was either — or his brother who called.
4. — who had always aided her, she now saw dead at her feet.
5. I should never have imagined it to be —.
6. The incendiary is thought to have been —.
7. Yes, I told them what you said, — among the rest.
8. It was Joseph, — whom Pharaoh made prime minister.
9. Whom can I trust, if not —?
10. He cannot have said that I did it, for he did it —.
11. Bedford was forced to be still at times, for Berkeley was nine inches taller than —.
12. In the second part, we have a specimen of the style of Louis Blanc, a style which belongs to no other than —.
13. He frankly avowed — to be Wilfred of Ivanhoe.
14. It was the king's whim that on this night —, his friends, and his principal gentlemen should assume Persian attire.
15. Boys like you and — are expected to do what is right without being told.

She, her, herself, she herself

1. Yes, you have seen Cassio and — together.
2. Her brother is several years younger than —.
3. She never troubles — about that.
4. It was not — but her sister whom you met yesterday.
5. I cannot let you and — sit together.
6. Although her maid was there, — washed the little waif's face.
7. If any one is late it will be sure to be —.
8. Such girls as — will succeed.
9. Girls like — will succeed.
10. Another girl, — whom he had seen at the station, soon came into the room.

They, them, themselves, they themselves

1. Let — who raise the spell beware the fiend.
2. They have saved — that trouble.
3. It must be so, for — told me.
4. It proved to be —.
5. We shall soon be as poor as —.
6. The mischievous boys you speak of could not have been — ;
for — were at home.
7. What were you and — having so good a time over?
8. Father wants you and — to come to his study.
9. Whom did I see on the boat, you or — ?

Who, whom, whoever, whomever

1. He has a young companion — he believes is his friend.
2. — are you talking to?
3. — should we find there but the pilot?
4. He could not prove — he was.
5. — do men say that I am?
6. — do men think me to be?
7. — am I supposed to be?
8. My father rashly offered to marry me to — should make me
laugh.
9. — did you say went with you?
10. I do not know — you mean.
11. — do you think she looks like?
12. — did you suppose it was?
13. A witness — the counsel for the defence expected would be
present was kept away.
14. A witness — the counsel for the defence expected to be
present was kept away.
15. Give it to — you think worthy of it.
16. — does he think it could have been?
17. I don't know — to ask for.
18. I know — it is I serve.
19. He is one — I know that I can trust.
20. He is one — I know can be trusted.
21. He is one — I know to be trustworthy.
22. How can one tell — to trust?

EXERCISE XLV

If the form of any pronoun is objectionable, substitute a better one; give your reason for each correction: —

1. I admit that Gladstone and myself are justified in our admiration of the policy pursued.
2. Hugh says that we shall go some day, just him and me.
3. Tell him to come here to-day, — he or one of his men.
4. It was not only her whom he saw.
5. If anybody was harmed by their proceedings, it was themselves.
6. I knew at once whom it must be.
7. She felt some anxiety about Took's, whom she knew would not waver, whatever happened.
8. There was also a brother of the Fairstairs girls, Joe Fairstairs, who was younger than them.
9. Tung Fu Hsian had 15,000 regular troops, all devoted to himself.
10. Alexander III held that God could not have made such an inadequate person as himself czar of Russia without meaning to guide him.
11. If he is not fitted to lead the Liberal party, who can we have?
12. A reward of five thousand purses will be given to whomsoever brings the said prince, alive, to our castle of Falkenstein.
13. A person believed to be him offered the horse for sale.
14. If the peculiarity is shared by two such pleasant persons as you and me, it must be a good thing.
15. A very scandalous report has been sent out by certain persons, whomsoever they may be.

Case before a Gerund. — With gerunds the use of pronouns, as of nouns,¹ presents a troublesome question.

I

The Kemps would not hear of our going till the weather was safe.

I always remember your saying so.

I did not think of his being archdeacon.

II

The Kemps would not hear of *us* going till the weather was safe.

I always remember *you* saying so.

I did not think of *him* being archdeacon.

¹ See page 52.

Before a gerund a pronoun, like a noun, should be in the possessive case. Unless the possessive is used, a sentence may be ambiguous. Thus, the second sentence under II may mean either "I always remember you as you looked while saying so," or "I always remember the fact that you said so."

I
I have no doubt of its being
she.

II

I have no doubt of *it* being
her.

In this example, "the pronoun 'she,' coming in a soundly objective phrase," as a teacher puts it, "seems, to the ear, ungrammatical, as if it were dependent upon 'of'"; whereas it is not the word "she," but the phrase "its being she," that depends on "of." The gerund "being" in its office as noun takes the possessive "its"; in its office as verb it takes "she" after it, as the verb "is" would do if the same thought were expressed thus, "I have no doubt that it is she."¹

An apparent exception to the general rule regarding the use of the possessive case before a gerund is presented by a pronoun which, like “this” or “each,” has no inflection. Such a pronoun must, of course, have the same form before a gerund that it has in any other position. For example : —

I have my doubts as to this being true.

You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. — SHAKESPEARE.²

Before a gerund, put a limiting pronoun in the possessive case.

EXERCISE XLVI

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the pronoun in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

¹ See page 109.

² *Macbeth*, i. 3. Both of these examples are quoted in W. B. Hodgson's "Errors in the Use of English."

1. Do you object to me (my) talking?
2. Imagine him (his) climbing a mountain with no one to talk to.
3. Just imagine me (my) distributing political circulars.
4. Think 'of me (my) eating frogs' legs.
5. I heard of him (his) coming home.
6. You (your) having come to town will soon be known.
7. He smiled at me (my) trying to learn Hebrew.

“The One” and “The Ones.” — “The one” and “the ones” are frequently misused.

I

At last Wildrake came into the presence of him whom he dreaded.

II

At last Wildrake reached the presence of *the one* whom he dreaded.

The sentence under II exemplifies the common fault of using *the one* for “he” or “she,” “him” or “her.” “The one” is correctly used to distinguish a particular one of a class from others: *e.g.* “When the camp was hungry . . . each scout prayed that he might be the one who should find food” (George Bird Grinnell); “I haven’t the smallest doubt that you will outlast us all, and that you are the one who will live” (Douglas Jerrold).

I

The story is told by one who observed the facts.

II

The story is told by *the one* who observed the facts.

If the writer means that only one of several persons observed the facts, and that the story is told by that one, “the one” is correct; but if, as seems probable, he means that it is told by some observer, no matter who, the vague “one” is the proper word.

I

I have been comparing these themes with those I wrote last year.

II

I have been comparing these themes with *the ones* I wrote last year.

Milton’s ideas were very different from those of the old Italians.

Milton’s ideas were very different from *the ones* of the old Italians.

In each of these examples, the comparison is not between certain things (themes or ideas) considered one by one and certain others, but between one set of things and another set. In the first example, moreover, "these" before "themes" naturally calls for "those" before "I wrote." Correctly used, "the ones" fixes attention on persons or things regarded individually, "those" on persons or things regarded collectively. "The ones" is correct in the following sentence from a short story by Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt: "I know about the flowers on the short road [as contrasted with the flowers on the long road], and they are the ones I want." "The ones" is usually, however, coupled with an adjective, as "the shining ones," "the blue ones," "the long ones."

Use "the one" or "the ones" to mark a contrast between individuals in a class or a group.

"Either" or "Any One," "Neither" or "No One"?—*Either* and *neither* are sometimes used where "any one" and "no one" would be the proper words.

I

Subscriptions may be sent to any one of the ten subscribers.

No one of the three women could perform the easiest work.

II

Subscriptions may be sent to *either* of the ten subscribers.

Neither of the three women could perform the easiest work.

Had there been but two subscribers and two women, "either" and "neither" would have been correct.

Use "either" and "neither" to refer to two persons or things, "any one" and "no one" to refer to more than two.

"All," "Each," or "Every One"?—The adjective *all* is sometimes used for the pronoun "each" or "every one"; and *each* is sometimes used for "all."

I

Each of the workmen received two dollars a day.

All the children are of the same size.

II

All the workmen received two dollars a day.

Each of the children is of the same size.

In the first example, "each" is the proper word; for the meaning is, not that the workmen as a body received two dollars a day, but that every individual in the body received that amount. In the second example, "all" is the proper word; for it is absurd to say that *each* child is of the same size with himself.

I

Election gave the governed some choice in the selection of the governors, and lot gave every one a chance of being made one of the governors.

II

Election gave the governed some choice in the selection of the governors, and lot gave *all* a chance of being made one of the governors.

All could not be made "one of the governors." Between "all" and "every one" the distinction seems to be that "every one" expresses distributively what "all" expresses collectively. "Every one" puts less emphasis than "each" on individuals. Shakspeare's lines bring out the distinction between "all" and "every one":—

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

Lady Macduff. Every one.¹

Use "all" to direct attention to a number or amount, "each" and "every one" to direct attention to individuals.

"Each Other" or "One Another"?—Some grammarians maintain that "each other" should be used in speaking of two persons or things, "one another" in speaking of more than two; but good writers use "each other" and "one another" interchangeably.²

¹ Macbeth, iv. 2.

² A reader of the second volume of "Woodstock" noticed nine instances of the use of "each other" to refer to two persons, five to refer to more than two.

EXERCISE XLVII

Insert in each blank the proper pronoun ;¹ give the reason for your choice : —

He, him, she, her, the one; those, the ones

1. He was very hard and unrelenting to — who owed him.
2. One of these three contains Portia's portrait; — who selects the casket containing it will be the fortunate suitor.
3. Of all creatures that feed upon the earth, the professional critic is — whose judgment I least value; but of all writers — whom he sits in judgment on is — whom he is least qualified to criticize.
4. These trees are — to be cut out.
5. My mind is filled with plots similar to — depicted.
6. Of the four, — whom I mean is sitting in the back seat.
7. I have every opportunity for making — happy who consents to be my wife.

Either, any one; neither, no one

1. — of the three moved or spoke.
2. Dryden, Pope, and Wordsworth have not scrupled to lay a profane hand upon Chaucer, a mightier genius than — of them.
3. Has — of you two gentlemen a fountain-pen?
4. I have several histories of France, — of which will give you the information.
5. Give it to both students or to — of them.

All, each, every one

1. Let — meet at the Providence Station at nine A.M.
2. — that asketh receiveth.
3. — gave me his (their) hand(s).
4. He gave an apple to — of us.

Choice of Relative. — It is not always easy to determine which is the proper relative pronoun.

I

He was in daily contact with Whately and the other thinkers for whom Oriel College was famous.

II

He was in daily contact with Whately and the other thinkers for *which* Oriel College was famous.

¹ In some cases one pronoun or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

“Which,” once commonly used of persons,—a usage that survives in “Our Father which art in heaven,”—now always refers to a neuter antecedent.

I

Dewey’s only need now is men
with whom to take and hold the
city.

II

Dewey’s only need now is men
with *which* to take and hold the
city.

In this example, “whom” is correct; for the antecedent of the relative is “men.” If, however, the antecedent had been a collective noun meaning a body of men, “which” would have been correct: *e.g.* “Dewey’s only need now is a force with which to take and hold the city.” A collective noun that refers to a collection of persons as a whole takes “which,” one that refers to the individuals composing the collection takes “who”: *e.g.* “I was a member of the committee which had in charge the victualling of Paris after the surrender”; “Your committee, who are unable to agree on this point, ask for instructions.”

In speaking of animals, we should, according to some grammarians, always use “which”; but there is plenty of authority in support of “who.” For example:—

Against the Capitol I met a lion,

Who glared upon me, and went surly by. — SHAKSPERE.¹

Shere Khan was the tiger who lived near the Waingunga River, twenty miles away. — KIPLING.

The prevailing obscurity and silence have made these vaults a favorite resort of bats, who nestle during the day in the dark nooks and corners. — IRVING.

The sun is . . . turning even the muddy water . . . into a mirror for the yellow-billed ducks, who are seizing the opportunity of getting a drink with as much body in it as possible. — GEORGE ELIOT.

I

The soldiers and cannon that
you saw belong to the French
army.

II

The soldiers and cannon *which*
you saw belong to the French
army.

¹ Julius Cæsar, i. 3.

If the antecedent of the relative pronoun had been "soldiers" alone, "whom" would have been correct; if "cannon" alone, "which": but, since the antecedent includes both persons and things, "that" is preferable to either "who" or "which."

Some grammarians would reserve "that" for clauses which restrict the meaning of the antecedent,¹ as "The book that I bought yesterday cost fifty cents"; they would confine "who" and "which" to clauses that do not restrict the meaning of the antecedent, as "The hat belongs to my brother, who is visiting me." Even if this distinction were firmly established, to insist upon the observance of it by young writers might lead to the neglect of things far more important; but the warmest advocates of the rule admit that there are important exceptions to it, and that it finds little support in the practice of reputable authors. In this matter the ear is a surer guide than any theory, and the ear often decides against the theory in question. There may be ears which prefer "that book that you spoke of" to "that book which you spoke of," but hardly any would prefer "that that you spoke of" to "that which you spoke of." No one would say "the house in *that* Holmes was born," and few would prefer "the house that Holmes was born in" to "the house in which Holmes was born."

Sometimes, on the other hand, the ear accords with the theory in question. In such lines, for example, as

Hearts that once beat high for praise [MOORE],
Thoughts that breathe and words that burn [GRAY],
Eyes that would not look on me [SHERIDAN],

"that," following without intervening pause a plural noun ending in "s," is easier to speak and more agreeable to hear than "which" would be. So, too, after an interrogative "who," "that" is preferable to "who": *e.g.* "Who

¹ See page 26.

that can go will not?" In this sentence, "that" is restrictive; but in Goldsmith's line

For he who fights and runs away,

"who" is restrictive, and is unobjectionable. The choice between "that" and "who" or "which" is, in short, usually made by the ear.

I

To this may be added the extraordinary methods of one of Cleary's counsel, the natural effect of which would be prejudicial to the interests of his client.

II

To this may be added the extraordinary methods of one of Cleary's counsel, *whose* natural effect would be prejudicial to the interests of his client.

If *whose*, in the sentence under II, referred to "Cleary's counsel," it would be correct, for the counsel consists of persons; but since it refers unmistakably to "methods," "of which" is preferable. Though this distinction between "whose" and "of which" is usually made by good authors, it would be going too far to say, as some grammarians do, that "whose" should never stand for an inanimate thing not personified. The truth is that the choice between the two forms is often a question of euphony.

I

The woman is bound to a tree, in the bark of which [*or* a tree, in which] arrows are sticking.

II

The woman is bound to a tree, in *whose* bark arrows are sticking.

A good writer who let his ear decide might prefer "in *whose* bark" to "in the bark of which"; but "in which" seems preferable to either, for it is the shortest way of saying all that is to be said.

I

The Lilliputians ask Gulliver to destroy the nation whose ships he has already taken.

A lady inquired if a monthly magazine, the name of which was unknown to me, had yet arrived.

II

The Lilliputians ask Gulliver to destroy this nation *of which* he has already taken the ships.

A lady inquired if a monthly magazine, *whose* name was unknown to me, had yet arrived.

In the first example, "whose" is preferable to *of which*, not only because it is more euphonious, but also because "nation," the antecedent of the relative, refers to persons. In the second example, *whose* might be defended on the ground that there is a personal element in the antecedent; but "of which" seems preferable. Shakspeare, however, uses "whose" still more freely in the well-known lines,

The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns.¹

I

I shall touch upon such of his
work as has appealed to me.

II

I shall touch upon such of his
work *which* has appealed to me.

Which is to be found after "such" in some of the older authors, but "as" is now preferred.

I

She was hard to forget for the
same reason that you would be.

II

She was hard to forget for the
same reason *as* you would be.

Some authorities make a nice distinction between "same as" and "same that," on the ground that "*same as*" usually expresses identity of kind, *same that* absolute identity."² Thus, "He uses the same tools as I do" means that he and I use the same sort of tools; "He uses the same tools that I do" means that we use the same set of tools. In the sentence under consideration, "that" is correct; for the writer means, not the same sort of reason, but the very same reason. In an elliptical sentence like "He uses the same tools as I," "as" is the only proper word: "He uses the same tools *that* I" is not an English sentence.

I

She could not believe that
their relations would be the same
as ever.

II

She could not believe that
their relations would be the same
as they had ever been.

¹ Hamlet, iii. 1.

² See the Oxford English Dictionary, under "As."

“The same *as* they had ever been” is incorrect, for the meaning is “the very same”; but “the same that they had ever been,” though correct, would, on grounds of euphony, be objectionable after “that their.” “As ever” is, therefore, the better form.

In choosing relatives, observe the following distinctions:—

Who is used of persons and sometimes of animals; **which** is used of animals, of things, and of a collection of persons regarded as a unit; **that** is used of persons and things named together. In other cases, the choice between **who** or **which** and **that** is decided by euphony.

Whose is used of anything with animal life or of anything personified; **of which** is used of anything without animal life, unless euphony requires **whose**.

As is the proper relative after **such**.

The same as usually denotes identity of kind, **the same that** absolute identity.

EXERCISE XLVIII

Insert in each blank the proper relative pronoun;¹ give the reason for your choice:—

1. The remnant — are in prison deserve better treatment.
2. The committee to — I belong meets in the west chapel.
3. I will have no son-in-law — thinks himself better than I am.
4. Time — is lost is never found again.
5. There are many — saw him fall.
6. Who — hears Dr. Furness read Shakspeare is not delighted?
7. She is the same girl since her marriage — she was before it.
8. He — does all — he can, does all — can be expected.
9. Was it you or the wind — made those noises?
10. He held the same political opinions — his illustrious friend.
11. We saw the men and arms — were captured.
12. My attention was attracted by a little monkey named Darwin, — was uttering a strange sound — I had never before heard one of his species utter.

¹ In some cases, the choice between pronouns may be determined by individual taste.

EXERCISE XLIX

Choose between the two forms suggested; give the reason for your choice:—

1. They were wafted gaily past the Kaatskill mountains, whose fairy heights [*or the fairy heights of which*] were bright and cloudless.

2. The deer whose head [*or the head of which*] you see over that door was killed in 1872.

3. Mr. Bryce was chairman of the Royal Commission, the recommendations of which [*or whose recommendations*] the Education Bill follows.

4. A closet, the doors of which [*or whose doors*] were taken off, contained three whole shelves of books, a collection whose like [*or the like of which*] Dolph had never before beheld.

5. China is a nation whose customs [*or the customs of which*] are very different from ours.

6. Don't go in the carriage one of whose wheels [*or one of the wheels of which*] is broken.¹

7. Here and there is a mansion the secret of whose closed room [*or the secret of the closed room of which*] has never been penetrated.

EXERCISE L

Correct errors in the use of relative pronouns; give your reason for each correction:—

1. There were present three great men, only two of which I shall be able to speak of this evening.

2. These prices will be allowed on such bicycles that have been put in first-class condition.

3. This book, whose idea was suggested by the needs of some foreign students, is now presented as the first of a series.

4. The pupils were required to learn the most trivial details of the biography of the author which they were studying.

5. She had been converted by precisely the same methods, and in precisely the same length of time, as I had.

6. It was Colonel Cruft's brigade, who moved forward and crossed the road.

7. The total number of Boer prisoners is over 25,000, of which 689 are under sixteen years of age.

¹ Can this sentence be expressed in a form better than either of these?

Change of Pronoun. — A hasty writer sometimes begins a sentence with a pronoun of one kind, and then uses a pronoun of another kind to represent the same person or thing as the first; or he makes a still more careless change in person or number.

I

He told me about a man whose name was Hayden and whose place of business was Syracuse.

In these scenes, Dickens seems like a bird whose flight is near the earth, but which at intervals rises on its strong pinions and almost reaches heaven.

II

He told me about a man whose name was Hayden, and *his* place of business was Syracuse.

In these scenes Dickens seems like a bird whose flight is near the earth but at intervals *it* rises on its strong pinions and almost reaches heaven.

In each of the sentences under II, a personal pronoun is coupled with a relative. This practice, though not without authority, should be avoided.

I

One [*or You*] shuddered as the dreadful sufferings of the wounded flashed across one [*or you*].

None feel this more keenly than those who know what it is to enjoy the comforts of home, but who are far away, with nothing but an occasional letter to assure them that the home still exists.

After seeing her once, you would not care to see her again. With angular features and faded cheeks, she presents a picture which would pain you.

II

One shuddered as the dreadful sufferings of the wounded flashed across *you*.

None feel this more keenly than those who know what it is to enjoy the comforts of home, but who are far removed from it, and with nothing but an occasional letter to assure *us* that the home still exists.

After seeing her once, you would not care to see her again. With angular features and faded cheeks, she presents a picture which would pain *him*.

In the first sentence under II, the writer has made an awkward change from the third person to the second, a change which leaves the reader in momentary doubt

whether "one" and *you* refer to the same person or not. A similar obscurity exists in each of the other sentences under II.

I

When one comes [*or* When we come] to think of it, the power to express one's [*or* our] thoughts in language is, perhaps, the most wonderful thing in the world.

One [*or* A man] never needs one's [*or* his] wit so much as when one [*or* he] argues with a fool.

II

When one comes to think of it, the power to express *his* thoughts in language is perhaps the most wonderful thing in the world.

One never needs *his* wit so much as when *he* argues with a fool.

In sentences like those under II, the change from "one" to *his*, though less awkward than the changes just noticed (for "one" and "his" are both of the third person), is not to be recommended. On the other hand, the frequent repetition of "one" is often awkward, especially in the hands of an unskilful writer. A good way of avoiding the use of too many "one's" is to start with "we," "you," or "a man," and to keep to forms that accord with the word chosen.

With "any one," "every one," "no one," etc., we instinctively couple "his," not *one's*: *e.g.* "Any one can keep his face clean," "Every one loves his mother," "With this sauce no one could help eating his fill," "Not one of us but would give his right hand not to have done this thing."

I

We, the undersigned, cordially concur in the report upon the Cuban resolutions, but we favor the immediate recognition of the republic of Cuba.

II

The undersigned cordially concur in the report upon the Cuban resolutions, but *we* favor the immediate recognition of the republic of Cuba.

The first clause of the sentence under II is in the third person, the second clause in the first person. The insertion of "we" before "the undersigned" removes the obscurity caused by the change of person.

I

Mrs. Brown can see Miss Lewis on Tuesday at ten o'clock. Mrs. Brown thinks that Miss Lewis's dress is of a good quality, and that it will not wrinkle.

10 June Street.

II

MISS LEWIS : —

Mrs. Brown can see Miss Lewis on Tuesday at ten o'clock. Mrs. Brown thinks *your* dress is of a good quality and will not wrinkle.

Yours respectfully,

10 June Street. MRS.¹ BROWN.

Mrs. Brown's note should have been written throughout either in the first person or in the third, and not partly in one person and partly in the other.

"Punch" ridicules the loose use of pronouns at English universities as follows : —

First Undergraduate (reading out). — Will this do, Gus? "Mr. Smith presents his compliments to Mr. Jones, and finds he has a cap which isn't mine. So, if you have a cap which isn't his, no doubt they are the ones."

Second Undergraduate. — Oh, yes; first-rate!

Never change from one pronoun to another without a sufficient reason.

EXERCISE LI

Insert in each blank the proper pronoun ; give the reason for your choice : —

1. Ere you remark another's sin,
 Bid ——— conscience look within.
2. Every one is as Heaven made ———.
3. Those were most eligible whose toes were lightest and ——— outside trappings were brightest.
4. One doesn't, one simply can't if ——— would, give ——— mother up.
5. What pleased me most, and ——— has been most frequently mentioned, was the beauty of the buildings.

EXERCISE LII

Write each note in correct and clear form : —

1. Sir Pitt Crawley begs Miss Sharp and baggidge may be hear on Tuesday, as I leaf for Queen's Crawley tomorrow morning erly. —
THACKERAY.

¹ See page 41.

2. Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty request the honour and pleasure of Mr. Swigby's company (if you have no better engagement) to tea tomorrow evening, at half-past five. — THACKERAY.

3. DEAR SIR:—

The writer is desirous of taking a thorough course in rhetoric under the best possible instruction. My preparation for teaching was a high-school training only. May I ask your advice as to where I can obtain what my case requires?

Yours very respectfully,

JOSHUA ADAMS.

Write, as if for insertion in a first-rate newspaper, a short paragraph soliciting a "situation."

Write two formal notes in the third person, one asking an acquaintance to dine with you at a certain hour in order that you may consult with him about some matter of importance, the other accepting or declining this invitation.

Write a formal note in the third person to some gentleman to whom you have a letter of introduction, asking when it will be convenient for him to see you.

Write a notice in the third person offering a reward for the recovery of a lost article.

EXERCISE LIII

Correct errors in the use of pronouns ; give your reason for each correction :—

1. I wish you would take a little rest and spare thyself.
2. It is the purpose of the Board to extend this work as rapidly as our facilities will justify.
3. Let every woman voter help the cause by asking the grocers for this article, and ask your friends to do the same.
4. One doesn't know who his friends are.
5. See that man whose hair is gray and his beard black.
6. Every one is one's own master.
7. At first one is likely to wonder where the boats are, since on entering the grove you are able to see only a small cabin.

Singular or Plural? — The number of a pronoun is determined by the number of the substantive which it represents.

I

We could wish that the English of these sentences were not so slipshod as it now and then is.

II

We could wish that the English of these sentences were not so slipshod as *they* now and then are.

In this example, the pronoun in question refers to a singular noun, "English."

I

Man after man passed out before the pulpit, and laid his hard-earned dollars on the table.

II

Man after man passed out before the pulpit and laid *their* hard-earned dollars on the table.

Since the men referred to are thought of one by one, the pronoun should be singular.

I

"Robinson Crusoe" equalled "Gulliver's Travels" in truthful representation and excelled it in invention.

II

"Robinson Crusoe" equalled "Gulliver's Travels" in truthful representation and excelled *them* in invention.

It was the book called "Gulliver's Travels," not the separate travels, that "Robinson Crusoe" equalled.

I

The heroic man or woman acts according to the habit that nature has bred in him or in her.

II

The heroic man or woman acts according to the habit that nature has bred in *them*.

Heroic men and women act according to the habit that nature has bred in them.

Singular substantives connected by "or" or "nor" require a singular pronoun. Sometimes, as in this example, it is better to use the plural number throughout.

I

If any one will help, he may.
Each planned to take a separate course for himself.

II

If any one will help, *they* may.
Each planned to take a separate course for *themselves*.

Every one was absorbed in his own pleasure, or was bitterly resenting the absence of the pleasure he had expected.

At such a crisis, neither of them would have allowed his parliamentary energies to interfere with his domestic affairs.

If a person has the least bit of Shelley in his make-up, he will enjoy these verses.

Every one was absorbed in his or her own pleasure, or bitterly resenting the absence of the pleasure *they* expected.

At such a crisis, neither of them would have allowed *their* parliamentary energies to interfere with his domestic affairs.

If a person has the least bit of Shelley in *their* make-up, *they* will enjoy these verses.

There is no pronoun in English that exactly corresponds to "any one," "anybody," "every one," "everybody," "each," "either," "neither," "a person." *They* certainly does not, for each expression in this list is singular; "he or she" is clumsy. The only pronoun that will serve is "he," which may stand for mankind in general and thus include women as well as men: *e.g.* "A writer is thus prevented from determining which of his productions are to be given in a permanent form."¹ In conversation, the use of *they*, *their*, and *themselves* in sentences like those under II may be excused on the ground that there is no singular personal pronoun of common gender; but in serious writing it is best to avoid such violations of grammatical concord.

"None" may be either singular or plural. For example:—

None but the brave deserves the fair. — DRYDEN.

There is none like her, none. — TENNYSON.

A maid whom there were none to praise. — WORDSWORTH.

None think the great unhappy, but the great. — YOUNG.

There is none that doeth good, no, not one. — PSALMS xiv. 3.

None of these things move me. — ACTS xx. 24.

Use a singular pronoun to refer to a singular substantive, a plural pronoun to refer to a plural substantive.

¹ The context shows that the author of this sentence, Mrs. Oliphant, has herself in mind.

EXERCISE LIV

Insert in each blank the proper pronoun; give the reason for your choice:—

1. It is easy enough to say that an honorable fellow does not do such things; I say — do (does).
2. Next morning, no one would admit that — had seen a ghost.
3. Every person should be able to use a pencil to explain — ideas.
4. Whenever anybody got a chance to work him evil, — seemed to delight in doing so.
5. The man or the woman who fulfils these duties does thereby — duty to God.
6. Many a brave man met — death in the war.
7. It is true that this is a free country; but that does not mean that every one may do as — please (pleases).
8. Not an officer, not a private, escaped getting — clothes wet.
9. Will either of you gentlemen lend me — pencil?
10. Whoever loves — school should do — best to elevate its tone.
11. Franklin and Collins started together, each with very little money in — pockets.
12. Nobody should praise — -self (-selves).
13. Neither the merchant nor the lawyer made — -self (-selves) rich.
14. Everybody had the facts of the case before —.
15. We were now in the haunts of the sperm whale, or “cachalot,” a brilliant lookout being kept for any signs of — appearing.

EXERCISE LV

Correct errors in the use of the singular or the plural; give your reason for each correction:—

1. He offered to every one that passed a drink which would change their heads to heads of beasts.
2. If every person in a neighborhood would interest themselves in current events to the extent of knowing the local correspondent and always having a *bona fide* item for him when they meet them, the local paper would be far better than it is.
3. He does not know a single belle; even if he did, they would not care to dance with him.

4. Each had given their husband a ring, which they now begged back again.

5. In cases where monkeys have been fed for a long time on any one kind of food, when a banana is shown him he uses a sound which differs slightly from the ordinary food-sound.

6. This work the President or General Otis could have done themselves as well as the commission.

7. Nobody put themselves out of their way to secure her comfort.

8. It is the duty of every one who has the good fortune to know a man of genius to do any trifling thing they can to lighten his work.

9. It's a very disagreeable thing, I think, when one has just made acquaintance with anybody and likes them, to have them die.

Redundant Pronouns.—Sometimes a pronoun repeats an idea already expressed in the sentence.

I

Teacher. Who was Benjamin Franklin?

Pupil. Benjamin Franklin was a great American philosopher and statesman.

The laird's death, though it no doubt delayed our happiness, yet could not subtract anything from it.

II

Teacher. Who was Benjamin Franklin?

Pupil. Benjamin Franklin, *he* was a great American philosopher and statesman.

The laird's death, though it no doubt delayed, yet *it* could not subtract anything from, our happiness.

The repetition of the subject of a sentence in the form of a pronoun is a vulgarism rarely seen in writing but occasionally heard in conversation.

I

Louis and the tutor got as far as Berlin, with mutual satisfaction.

II

Louis and the tutor got as far as Berlin, with mutual satisfaction *to each other*.

In this example, since "mutual satisfaction" means in itself the satisfaction that Louis and the tutor had each with the other, *to each other* is superfluous.

Avoid as a hindrance any pronoun that is not a help to the sense or to the construction.

EXERCISE LVI

Strike out any redundant pronouns : —

1. Mary, though she has good qualities, she has much to learn.
2. I took the watch, and Jim he lay down and snored.
3. For twenty years they had lived together in mutual love and respect for each other.
4. We neither of us could keep still.
5. On certain subjects, which he endeavored to make his own and to speak upon them like a specialist, he was heard with deference.

Omitted Pronouns. — A pronoun necessary to the sense, or to the construction, or to both, is sometimes omitted.

I

I am sorry that you are having
bad weather.

Had I a picture of myself, I
would send it to you.

II

Am sorry that you are having
bad weather.

Had I a picture of myself,
would send it you.

Sentences like those under II are so common in business letters that the style which they exemplify has been called “commercial English.” It is certainly not good English.

I

I trust that you will have a
good summer, and [*or* Trusting
that you will have a good sum-
mer,] I beg to remain, as ever,

Yours with great esteem,

JOHN JONES.

II

I trust that you will have a
good summer and beg to remain,
as ever,

Yours with great esteem,

JOHN JONES.

The omission of the subject of “beg” might lead a hasty reader to suppose “you” to be the subject of both verbs.

I

He rang at his door; a parlor-
maid opened it.

II

He rang at his door; a parlor-
maid opened.

In this example, “open” is transitive and therefore requires an object. As an intransitive verb, it appears in Dr. Holmes’s well-known lines:—

That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down.

I

Five or six companions whom Jack had picked up or who had picked up Jack, and who lived upon him, advised him to wait.

In the absence of "who" before the second "had picked up," the sentence reads as if "whom" were the subject of that verb.

II

Five or six companions whom either Jack had picked up or had picked up Jack, and who lived upon him, advised him to wait.

I

His success is greater than that of any other healer in the city.

These prices are lower than those of any other shoemaker in town.

II

His success is greater than any other healer in the city.

These prices are lower than any other shoemaker in town.

Manifestly, the words omitted from each of the sentences under II are necessary to the sense.

I

There was a consultation between those who favored and those who opposed the project.

II

There was a consultation between those who favored and opposed the project.

"Those who favored and opposed" means those who favored and opposed at the same time—an absurdity. The real meaning is, of course, that the consultation was between two parties, "those who favored" and "those who opposed."

I

He availed himself of the opportunity.

He made me wait in the hall, and conducted himself like a man incapacitated for hospitality.

Don't trouble yourself about it.

II

He availed of the opportunity.

He made me wait in the hall and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality.

Don't trouble about it.

Reflexive pronouns are required with "avail of," "conduct," and "trouble" as used in these examples.

In formal writing, do not omit a pronoun that is needed to make the meaning clear or the sentence grammatical.

EXERCISE LVII

Supply any pronouns needed to make the meaning clear or the grammatical construction correct : —

1. Dr. Jones and wife were among the passengers.
2. It was Lewisham had persuaded her to delay the visit.
3. His horse is better than any other man in town.
4. My inability to get work, and destitute condition, depresses me.
5. Accept thanks for lovely present. Hope we may have the pleasure of using together in the near future.
6. His own upholstering and decorating business will be continued as usual, and will endeavor to fill all orders intrusted to his care.
7. Lind did not trouble to answer further.
8. Their inclination is always toward that which is commonly called the "sentimental," but some would call the "Christian."
9. The Citizens' Committee ought to avail of this opportunity for doing something distinctly practical.
10. These desertions came from the universal confidence in his measures Jefferson had the art to inspire.

CHAPTER VI

VERBS

Vulgarisms. — Some blunders in the use of verbs are, or should be, confined to the illiterate.

I

That's right, isn't it?

You aren't so fleshy as you were.

Am I not glad [*or* How glad I am] to see you!

He must come to grief because he doesn't work.

Haven't you been here before?

The house ought not to be so cool.

He ought to have told the whole story; he ought not to have concealed it.

You were well then, weren't you?

II

That's right, *ain't* it?

You *a'n't* so fleshy as you were.

Aren't I¹ glad to see you!

He must come to grief because he *don't*¹ work.

Hain't you been here before?

The house *didn't* ought to be so cool.

He *had* ought to have told the whole story; he *hadn't* ought to conceal it.

You *was*² well then, *wasn't* you?

It should be needless to note vulgarisms so gross as these; but they are sometimes on the lips of boys and girls who ought to know better, and even of men and women in their unguarded moments. If correctly used, contractions are of course natural and proper in conversation and in some kinds of writing; the speech of a person who never said "can't" for "can not," "don't"

¹ "*Aren't* I" is said by Bostonians to be current in New York; "he *don't*" has been termed by a New York journal "Bostonese": but the fact is that no vulgarism of this class is confined to one city or section.

² "You *was*," which is now a badge of vulgarity, was once, like many other vulgarisms, good English. Examples from various authors (from Henry More, 1651, to Dugald Stewart, 1819) are given by the late Dr. Fitzedward Hall, in the "Nation," March 10, 1892.

for "do not," "isn't" for "is not," would seem stiff or affected.

I

She had been thinking that perhaps she had [*or might*] better¹ go upstairs.

Had you not better rest now?

II

She had been thinking that perhaps she *would* better go upstairs.

Would you not better rest now?

"*Would* better," which seems to be increasingly common in conversation and in hasty writing, is not in accordance with the best usage.

I

I should be delighted to go to the World's Fair.

She is a little lanky as yet, but she will outgrow that defect.

He resembles you in the face.

She resembles her mother.

Any one of your children may expect to come here.

II

I should *admire* to go to the World's Fair.

She is a little lanky as yet, but she will *cure* of that.

He *favors* you in the face.

She *features* her mother.

Any one of your children may *look* to come here.

The italicized verbs as used in the sentences under II are found in some old authors, but are now obsolete.

I

"Have you any dental soap?"

"No, we don't keep it in stock."

It is said privately that the road will declare a dividend.

II

"Have you any dental soap?"

"No, we don't *carry* it."

It is *talked* privately that the road will declare a dividend.

Carry and *talk* as used in the sentences under II are "commercialisms" that are not sanctioned by good use.

I

He had heard of man-eaters in the South Sea.

II

He had *heard tell* of eaters of men in the South Sea.

"Hear tell" occurs in Shakspeare's sentence "She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband";² but the phrase is not in good use to-day.

¹ See pages 15-16.

² Much Ado about Nothing, ii. 1.

I

After breakfast Tom taught¹
Jim and me how to steer.

II

After breakfast Tom *learned*¹
me and Jim how to steer.

Learn in the sense of "teach," which was in good use in Shakspeare's time, is now a vulgarism.

I

He wouldn't let me go.
Our object was to enliven
things a little.

II

He wouldn't *leave* me go.
Our object was to *liven up*
things a little.

Leave in the sense of "let," and *liven up* in the sense of "enliven," have never been in good use.

Avoid vulgarisms in the use of verbs.

EXERCISE LVIII

Illustrate by original sentences (1) the correct contractions of "is not," "are not," "does not," "do not," "has not," "have not"; (2) the positive and the negative use of "ought"; (3) the correct negative-interrogative form of the first person singular of the present indicative of the verb "be," and that of the second person singular ("you") of the preterite indicative.

EXERCISE LIX

In place of any vulgarisms, substitute expressions that are in reputable use:—

1. In three months he will learn you any language you like to know.
2. Ain't we going to the beach to-day?
3. The manager featured his friend.
4. The probability of a coal famine is freely talked in some quarters.
5. "You would better follow me, now," said Miriam.
6. You hadn't ought to try to do so much all at once; you ain't strong enough.
7. I will never leave go of her, if you should cut my hands off.

¹ "Teach," says Mark Twain, "is not in the river [the Mississippi] vocabulary."

8. I should admire to go to Niagara.
9. When did you come? I didn't know you was here.
10. We don't carry that line of goods, madam.
11. Let her go away; she needs to be livened up.
12. The child will cure of that as he grows older.
13. You had ought to have told me the circumstances.

Incorrect Forms. — Some incorrect forms of verbs stray into print; many more are heard in the street.

I

He called his servants and bade them procure firearms.

She bade them good-night.

Prussia bid high for German leadership.

II

He called his servants and *bid* them procure firearms.

She *bid* them good-night.

Prussia *bade* high for German leadership.

The preterite tense of “bid” in the sense of “command,” and in expressions like “bid good-night,” “bid good-by,” “bid welcome,” “bid fair,” is “bade,” the past participle “bidden”; the preterite tense, as well as the past participle, of “bid” in the sense of “bid at auction,” “offer a price for” is “bid.”

I

All were expert divers, and John always dived to the bottom.

II

All were expert divers, and John always *dove* to the bottom.

Dove as the preterite of “dive” is common in conversation, and has been used by some good authors; but “dived” is now proper as both preterite tense and past participle.¹

I

I am sure thy father drank wine.

Lemonade is not much drunk among the French in winter.

I had also drunk a little too much ice-water.

II

I am sure thy father *drunk* wine.

Lemonade is not much *drank* among the French in winter.

I had also *drunken* a little too much ice-water.

¹ Straight into the river Kwasind

Plunged as if he were an otter,

Dived [in early editions *dove*] as if he were a beaver. —

LONGFELLOW: *Hiawatha*, vii; as cited in the *Century Dictionary*.

HILL'S RHET. AND COMP. — 10

A century or two ago, "drank" and "drunk" were used indiscriminately as preterite tense or as past participle; but the best modern usage restricts "drank" to the preterite tense, "drunk" to the past participle. "Drunken," once in good use as a participle, is now (except in poetry) an adjective only, as "a drunken man."

I

He gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily.

Whitebait are to be eaten at Greenwich only.

II

He gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows *eat* very heartily.

Whitebait are only to be *eat* at Greenwich.

The preterite of "eat" is "ate," the past participle "eaten." The use of *eat* for "ate" is not without authority, but "ate" is far preferable; the use of *eat* for "eaten" is confined to the illiterate.

I

Silver has flowed into the treasury this year.

II

Silver has *flown* into the treasury this year.

"Flown" is the past participle of "fly," "flowed" of "flow."

I

I fear you have forgotten your father's character.

II

I fear you have *forgot* your father's character.

"Forgot" is the correct form for the preterite tense, "forgotten" for the past participle. "Forgot" as past participle is sometimes used in verse:—

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?—BURNS.

No eye to watch, and no tongue to wound us,
All earth forgot, and all heaven around us.—MOORE.

I

Before I had got halfway across the yard, men came swarming out of the building.

II

Before I had *gotten* halfway across the yard, men came swarming out of the building.

Gotten, an old form of the past participle, is no longer in good use in England. In America it is sometimes found in authors of repute, but the current of the best usage is against it. The adjective "ill-gotten" is in good use wherever English is spoken.

I

The prisoner was sentenced to be hanged immediately.

II

The prisoner was sentenced to be *hung* immediately.

An English judge is reported to have said, "Beef, Sir, is hung, men are hanged."¹ Of "hang" in the sense of "put to death by hanging," both the preterite tense and the past participle are "hanged"; in all other senses, "hung."

I

Orlando laid Adam down carefully in a sheltered spot.

II

Orlando *lay* Adam down carefully in a sheltered spot.

Gulliver lay down and fell into a heavy sleep.

Gulliver *laid* down and fell into a heavy sleep.

The fact that the present tense of "lay" and the preterite tense of "lie" have the same form probably accounts for many of the frequent mistakes in the use of the verbs "lay" and "lie." "Lay" (preterite and past participle "laid") is transitive: *e.g.* "I said, 'Lay the bone down,' and he laid it down"; "He has laid it down." "Lie" (preterite "lay," past participle "lain") is intransitive: *e.g.* "I said, 'Lie down!' and he lay down"; "He has lain down." "There let him *lay*" deforms Byron's apostrophe to the ocean in "Childe Harold."

I

I got up and lighted a lamp.

II

I got up and *lit* a lamp.

A century ago, to have lighted this theatre as it is now lighted would have cost fifty pounds.

A century ago, to have *lit* this theatre as it is now lighted would have cost fifty pounds.

Lit in the sense of "illuminated" has been used by poets, and by some good writers of prose, as both preterite tense

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under "Hang."

and past participle of "light"; but in ordinary prose the better form in each case is "lighted."

I

It is proved that his account of European society is accurate.

II

It is *proven* that his account of European society is accurate.

The phrase "not proven" appears in the legal dialect of Scotland; but in English "proved" is the correct form for both preterite tense and past participle.

I

If you had a strong fire, and your steam were inclined to rise, what should you do?

II

If you had a strong fire, and your steam were inclined to *raise*, what should you do?

How values have risen on Boylston Street!

How values have *raised* on Boylston Street!

"Rise" (preterite "rose," past participle "risen") is intransitive; "raise" (preterite and past participle "raised") is transitive. The distinction between the two verbs is sharply drawn by Goldsmith in a line of "The Deserted Village":—

"More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise."

I

Papa set her in a big chair.
Papa seated her in a big chair.
She sat down before the fire.
Why don't you sit still?

II

Papa *sat* her in a big chair.
She *set* down before the fire.
Why don't you *set* still?

Almost as common as mistakes in the use of "lie" and "lay" are those in the use of "sit" and "set." "Sit" (preterite and past participle "sat") is intransitive: *e.g.* "I said, 'Sit down,' and he sat down"; "I have sat here all day." "Set" (preterite and past participle "set") is transitive: *e.g.* "I said, 'Set that jug down,' and he set it down"; "I have set the jug on the table." "Seat" (preterite and past participle "seated") is transitive and often reflexive: *e.g.* "We seated the guests of honor in front," "The young men seated themselves in a row by the door."

I

Your coat sits well.
The old gray hen is sitting.

II

Your coat *sits* well.
The old gray hen is *sitting*.

Though *set* is common, at least colloquially, in sentences like those under II, "sit" is preferable: a garment "sits" well or ill, a hen "sits" on eggs.

I

They will find that every stroke
which any mortal struck was
struck for the cause of good.

II

They will find that every stroke
which any mortal struck was
stricken for the cause of good.

"Stricken" is rare as a participle except in figurative expressions (especially those that imply misfortune, as "The town is stricken with pestilence"), and in phrases that preserve a very old meaning of the verb, as "stricken [advanced] in years." It is in good use as an adjective, as "the stricken deer." "Struck" is the usual form for the past participle as well as for the preterite tense.

I

During this time, Antonio's
ships have all been sunk.

II

During this time, Antonio's
ships have all been *sunken*.

"Sunken," once in good use as the past participle of "sink," is now an adjective only, as "a sunken ship"; "sunk" is the past participle in present use. "Sunk" is sometimes used as preterite, but "sank" is preferable.

Avoid preterites and past participles that are not in good use.

EXERCISE LX

Insert in each blank the proper form of the verb:—

Bid

1. He took leave and — me fly.
2. He turned and — his faithful attendants good-night.
3. I didn't get the rug, for Mr. Smith — higher than I did.
4. It stood a chance of not being — for.
5. That spirit had — defiance to the house of Valois.
6. The expedition — [preterite] fair to be a long one.

Dive

1. He —— into the first alley and was out of sight in a moment.
2. Before I had said six words he had —— from the bridge.

Drink

1. She has sat at my hearth, and —— of my cup.
2. I —— [preterite] in the wind with keen enjoyment.
3. Having eaten and ——, we started again with fresh courage.

Eat

1. I was not hungry, but the others —— voraciously.
2. Up to this point I had —— nothing.
3. This soon —— up the greater part of my salary.

Flow, fly

1. During the night the river had over- —— its banks.
2. The yacht —— [preterite] like a bird before the wind.
3. The lotus-eaters watched the gleaming river as it —— seaward.
4. The mother bird had —— too far.

Forget

1. We had no candles: they had been ——.
2. Have you —— me?

Get

1. An attack was made as soon as the troops could be —— ready.
2. You know you had —— into the habit of going off by yourself.

Hang

1. Clothes are —— on the line; men are ——.
2. The king caused him to be —— in the Palace of Westminster, where his body —— for two days.

Lay, lie

1. The child entered the door of Silas Marner's cottage and —— down in front of the fire.
2. The dog has always —— by his master's bed.
3. After he —— down he remembered that he had —— his pocket-book by the open window.
4. —— down and rest.
5. The hen has —— an egg.
6. You may —— till I call you.

Light

1. The hall is — by electricity.
2. The fire — [preterite] the whole sky.

Prove

1. His generalship was amply — in the Civil War.
2. Shylock is — guilty of seeking Antonio's life.

Raise, rise

1. Bread — with yeast we had not tasted for six months.
2. The bread has not — at all.
3. Those who have been — by some great minister often forget by what means they have —.
4. As I entered the room every man —.

Set, sit, seat

1. The guests were no sooner — than they began a warm debate.
2. Esther had already — the table.
3. The hen — [present] on a piece of chalk as if it were an egg.
4. I have — opposite him at table for three years.
5. He was — at the window where he so often — as a boy.
6. I — the basket on a rock while I went to the spring.
7. I suddenly came upon a — hen who had stolen her nest.
8. How does my dress —?

Sink

1. Divers are to be sent down to find out where the steamer —.
2. In the morning, we heard that a boat had — just off the cape.
3. The schooner struck on a — reef.

Strike

1. The — woman bowed her head in speechless sorrow.
2. Just as he gave the order a bullet — him in the chest.
3. His name was — off the list.

EXERCISE LXI

Rewrite each sentence in two forms, — (1) with the verb that is within quotation-marks in the preterite tense, (2) with the same verb either in the perfect tense or in the passive voice : —

1. He "bids" the rioters disperse quietly.
2. Mr. Brown "bids" forty-two dollars for the picture.
3. Mary "lights" the lamps with a taper.
4. They often "raise" that question.
5. He "forgets" a thing in a day.
6. His cry "strikes" dismay into the heart of his friend.
7. I never "drink" soda.
8. The sheriff "hangs" the condemned man.
9. The maid "hangs" up my cloak.
10. They "lay" burdens on me greater than I can bear.
11. This "proves" the truth of my assertion.
12. A mist "rises" before my eyes.
13. He "sits" by the hour talking politics.
14. They "eat" their supper as if they were half starved.
15. The wild goose "flies" southward.
16. The Susquehanna River "overflows" its banks.
17. She "lies" down an hour every day.
18. The negro women "set" their baskets on their heads.
19. The vessel "sinks" with all on board.
20. Jack "gets" the mail.
21. Please "seat" the guests for me.
22. We "dive" from that rock.

Other verbs of which the preterites or the past participles are often incorrectly formed appear in the following list. Some of these verbs admit more than one form for the preterite tense or for the past participle, but only that form is given which has the support of the best present usage in prose:—

PAST			PAST		
PRESENT	PRETERITE	PARTICIPLE	PRESENT	PRETERITE	PARTICIPLE
alight	alighted	alighted	choose	chose	chosen
awake	awoke	awaked	come	came	come
befit	befitted	befitted	do	did	done
begin	began	begun	drive	drove	driven
beseech	besought	besought	dwelt	dwelt	dwelt
blow	blew	blown	fall	fell	fallen
break	broke	broken	forbid	forbade	forbidden
build	built	built	freeze	froze	frozen
burst	burst	burst	go	went	gone

PRESENT	PRETERITE	PAST		PRESENT	PRETERITE	PAST	
		PARTICIPLE				PARTICIPLE	
grow	grew	grown		shrink	shrank	shrunk	
heat	heated	heated		sing	sang	sung	
heave	heaved ¹	heaved ¹		slay	slew	slain	
lead	led	led		slide	slid	slid	
plead	pleaded	pleaded		speak	spoke	spoken	
ride	rode	ridden		spring	sprang	sprung	
ring	rang	rung		steal	stole	stolen	
run	ran	run		strive	strove	striven	
see	saw	seen		swim	swam	swum	
shake	shook	shaken		swing	swung	swung	
shine	shone	shone		take	took	taken	
shoe	shod	shod		throw	threw	thrown	
show	showed	shown		write	wrote	written	

EXERCISE LXII

Illustrate by original sentences the proper forms for the preterite tense and the past participle of each verb in the preceding list.

EXERCISE LXIII

In place of any forms that are not in good use for modern prose, substitute better ones:—

1. He begun to hear new words, and to repeat them.
2. They have already began to export fine wool.
3. We have chose to fill our hives.
4. He was beseeched to write for the paper at \$20 a column.
5. When I come to, the neighbors were round me.
6. The five ships sprung toward the enemy.
7. Dr. Briar done up the hand, and it seems to be doing well.
8. He is not drove as we are.
9. If it had been a hard case, I would have went.
10. I had not rode ten miles when the sun rose.
11. I forgot to say Garratt run off a month ago.
12. The keen-witted woman had absolutely ran him down.
13. I never seen him after that day.
14. Mr. Kipling should be forbid to bag another talking animal.

¹ "Hove" is in good use in nautical language.

15. The admiral, having shook hands, gets you a chair.
16. He has lead me a wild-geese chase through the town.
17. She shrunk at the word.
18. Before that he sung two or three songs at Catherine's request.
19. By the ninth the creek was froze over.
20. Have you blowed out the light?
21. A bird had fell out of its nest.
22. He builded his house in the valley.
23. The sand slided from beneath my feet.
24. The old gray hen has stole her nest.
25. The branches on which I was suspended over the yawning chasm swang to and fro in the air.
26. The fainting soul stood ready wing'd for flight,
And o'er his eye-balls swum the shades of night.
27. I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola.
28. You looked as if you had took root there.
29. I had rather Mark throwed away his money than his time.
30. I hope you have wrote to him the state of your mind.
31. If I had broke my neck instead of wetting my feet, it would have been just the same to some people.
32. Were it he, I am sure he would have spoke to us.
33. Once brightest shined this child of heat and air.
34. Do you want me to have the room lit and heat?
35. His breast hove as if it would have bursted.
36. I have awoke at seven these ten years.
37. At the gate I alit from my horse.
38. He had already showed me the road.
39. He plead his case well.
40. An old man oncè dwelled there alone.
41. Mr. Noon has always shoed my pony.
42. The bells rung at seven o'clock.

“Can” or “May”? — “Can” originally signified to know, then to know how;¹ but it gradually passed through these meanings into that of to be able. “May” originally signified to have power, to be able;¹ but as “can” assumed

¹ Examples of the older meanings will be found in the large dictionaries, and in E. A. Abbott's “Shakespearian Grammar.”

this meaning, the meaning of "may" weakened to that of be permitted. These changes have naturally caused much confusion between the two verbs.

"Can" (preterite "could") now has two principal uses, which are exemplified in the following quotations:—

A woman can sob from the top of her palate, or her lips, or anywhere else, but a man cries from his diaphragm, and it rends him to pieces. — KIPLING.

Ay, ay, laugh at me! I am very glad
You are not gulled by all this swaggering; you
Can see the root of the matter! — BROWNING.

Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? — JOB viii. 11.

Tell me, my soul, can this be death? — POPE.

"A woman can sob from the top of her palate" means that a woman is able (physically) so to sob; "You can see the root of the matter" means that you are able (mentally) to see it: in the first two quotations, then, "can" denotes ability. "Can the rush grow up without mire?" "Can the flag grow without water?" "Can this be death?" mean "Is it possible for the rush to grow up without mire?" etc.: in the last two quotations, then, "can" denotes possibility.

The preterite subjunctive of "can" is sometimes used to express inclination with a conditional element understood: *e.g.* "I could have sunk through the floor," "I could have cried"; that is, "I" would have done these things had the conditions been different.

"May" (preterite "might") has several uses, which are exemplified in the following quotations:—

"Tell me," said he, "that I may see you again to-morrow morning in our usual quiet, loving way, and that I may return home to-morrow evening." — TROLLOPE.

The man who plays with edge-tools may, by chance, cut his fingers.
— CHARLES HUTTON.

You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still. — MOORE.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he :
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see ! — COWPER.

In the first quotation, "may" expresses permission : "Tell me that I may" is equivalent to "Tell me that I have your permission to." In the second, "may" expresses contingency : "The man who plays with edge-tools" may cut his fingers or he may not. In the quotation from Moore, "may" expresses a concession of possibility : "You may break" is equivalent to "I grant that it is possible for you to break." In the quotation from Cowper, "may" expresses a wish.

The main distinctions between "can" and "may" are well brought out in the following quotations : —

Cousin Margaret, can I, I mean may I, go over to the boy? —
LAURA E. RICHARDS.

A woman may forgive deceit, treachery, desertion ; — even the preference given to a rival. She may forgive them and forget them ; but I do not think that a woman can forget a blow. — TROLLOPE.

The most common form of error in the use of these auxiliaries is shown in the following examples : —

I	II
May I give you a slice of beef? Good maple syrup will be taken on account ; it may be left at the station.	<i>Can</i> I give you a slice of beef? Good maple syrup will be taken on account and <i>can</i> be left at the station.

The authors of these sentences are speaking of that which is permissible, not of that which is possible ; "may," not *can*, is therefore correct.

A misuse of "might" appears in Mark Twain's "Jumping Frog" : —

One day a feller — a stranger in the camp, he was — come acrost him with his box, and says :

"What might it be that you've got in the box?"

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't — it's only just a frog."

Use "can" to express ability or possibility; use "may" to express permission, contingency, concession of possibility, or a wish.

EXERCISE LXIV

Explain the meaning of each "can," "could," "may," "might": —

1. "You told me she couldn't live!"

"I don't say she will, Mr. Lynch, but I say she may. Of course we must do what we can for her." — TROLLOPE.

2. If you hit a pony over the nose at the outset of your acquaintance, he may not love you, but he will take a deep interest in your movements ever afterwards. — KIPLING.

3. We wish, finally, that the last object to the sight of him who leaves his native shore, and the first to gladden him who revisits it, may be something which shall remind him of the liberty and the glory of his country. — DANIEL WEBSTER.

4. It [the local veto] might act harshly, and it is quite true that poor men in large towns cannot spend their evenings in their filthy homes. — MARK RUTHERFORD.

5. "Let her stay, please," said Isabel. "I would rather hear nothing that Pansy may not." — HENRY JAMES.

6. A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make her, she. — TENNYSON.

7. For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been!" — WHITTIER.

EXERCISE LXV

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the word in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. May (Can) I help you?

2. Such an opportunity may (can) not come twice in a man's life.

3. I may (can) go to town this afternoon, but I had rather not.

4. May (Can) I not see what everybody else sees?

5. I may (can) not get a holiday.
6. They wondered whether they might (could) be recognized in their disguises.
7. I will go if I may (can).

EXERCISE LXVI

Insert in each blank the proper word — “can,” “could,” “may,” or “might”; give the reason for your choice: —

1. If you are going to walk, — I go with you?
2. I — be stupid, but I — understand what he is aiming at.
3. — you tell me which is Mr. Ames's house?
4. You — come to see me whenever you — find time.
5. They asked whether they — have a holiday.
6. — your fortunate star guide you!
7. What was the cause of these doings no man — conceive.
8. If a rebellion broke out, the works — perish in a few hours.

Must. — “Must” presents a troublesome question.

I

Here Mr. Adonis encountered an obstacle which had to be [*or* which it was necessary to] overcome.

Their ammunition ran low, and one of the men was obliged to return to the settlement to replenish the stock.

Shelley lived in the clouds; Byron could not help fixing his eyes on himself.

II

Here Mr. Adonis encountered an obstacle which *must* be overcome.

Their ammunition ran low, and one of the men *must* return to the settlement to replenish the stock.

Shelley lived in the clouds; Byron *must* fix his eyes on himself.

In sentences like those under II, *must* is objectionable both because it is clumsy and because it creates a momentary obscurity as to the time expressed, in consequence of the fact that “must” has but one form for present, past, and future. Though it commonly refers either to present or to future time, it frequently, in indirect narration, refers to past time: *e.g.* “Then he said that he must go.”

Avoid “must” whenever it would be ambiguous or obscure.

EXERCISE LXVII

Write five sentences, as varied as possible, in each of which "must" is correctly used.

"Shall" or "Will"? — A person who has not been trained in early life to observe the proper distinctions between "shall" and "will" is sure to find difficulty in using them correctly; but every one will be helped by thinking of "shall" as the natural future form (which has in it nevertheless an element of compulsion), and of "will" as expressing volition¹ on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb. "Shall" expresses both futurity and necessity; "will" expresses purpose or, at least, willingness. In the expression of simple futurity, "shall" gives way to "will" when the necessity implied in "shall" is too strong for courtesy or for modesty.

In "I shall," "shall" is not discourteous, for the matter is in the hands of the speaker,² who cannot be discourteous to himself; "shall" is, then, in the first person, the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity. In "you shall"³ and "he shall," "shall," disregarding the feelings of the person spoken to or spoken of, expresses compulsion; "will" is, then, in the second and the third person the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity, for courtesy requires us to speak of the future of those whose destinies we do not profess to control as if we were saying what they themselves wished or, at least, assented to.

If, however, we wish to express, not simple futurity, but volition on the part of the speaker, we properly say "I will," "you shall," "he shall." These forms imply control by the speaker (unless he is simply prophesying⁴)

¹ Throughout this section, "volition" is used as a convenient term for anything that implies an act of will, whether expressed as a determination, a promise, or a threat.

² "The speaker" means the person whom we think of as speaking.

³ The archaic forms with "thou" are omitted for the sake of brevity.

⁴ The prophetic "shall" is discussed on pages 162-163.

of the destiny of the person represented by the subject of the verb,¹ without regard to that person's wish or his willingness.

"Shall" and "will" in the first person are properly used in the following quotations:—

I shall always regard him as a dearly loved friend; though for many years, no doubt, I shall be unable to express my friendship. — TROLLOPE.

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. — LUKE xv. 18.

In the first quotation, "shall" implies, not that the speaker has determined to be friendly and to be unable to express his friendship, but that these things are facts of the future; that is, "shall" expresses simple futurity.

In the second quotation, "will" implies that the speaker has determined upon one course rather than upon another; that is, "will" expresses volition.

"Shall" and "will" in the second person are properly used in the following quotations:—

"Well, we shall all miss you quite as much as you will miss us," said the master. — THOMAS HUGHES.

"Not pay it!" says he, "but you shall pay it!" — DEFOE.

In the first quotation, "you will miss us" means "you are going to miss us": "will" simply points to the future, as "shall" does in "we shall all miss you." With "we" (the first person), "the master" naturally uses "shall"; with "you" (the second person), he uses "will," the form that implies the assent of the person represented by "you,"—the form demanded by courtesy.

In the second quotation, "you shall pay it" means "I am determined that you shall pay it": "shall," disregarding the wishes of the person represented by "you," expresses volition on the part of the speaker, who does not mean to be courteous.

¹ In the first person, the speaker and the person represented by the subject of the verb are, of course, identical.

If—to give another example—I say, “You will be elected, whoever may be your opponent,” I do not suggest the exercise of volition by anybody; but if I say, “You shall be elected, whoever may be your opponent,” I imply that your election is within my control and that I am resolved to bring it about. Familiar examples of the imperative quality of “shall” in the second person appear in the Ten Commandments.

Because of the imperative quality of “shall” in the second person, “will” is by courtesy used for “shall” in official letters of direction, in military orders, etc.:—

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, May 26, 1898.

MAJ. GEN. NELSON A. MILES,

Commanding U. S. Army, Washington, D.C.

SIR: You will proceed to the following points, to make a thorough inspection of the troops there in camp,—Chickamauga, Ga., Tampa, Fla., Mobile, Ala.

You will be accompanied by the officers of your personal staff. On the completion of this duty you will return to the city and make report of the inspection herein ordered.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

R. A. ALGER,

Secretary of War.

“Shall” and “will” in the third person are properly used in the following quotations:—

Your lady wife will lay these tea-cosies and penwipers aside in a safe place, until she is asked to contribute to another Charity Bazaar. Then the tea-cosies and penwipers will be once more charitably sold. The new purchasers, in their turn, will accurately imitate the dispositions of your lady wife.—STEVENSON.

But she shall have him; I will make her happy if I break her heart for it.—GEORGE COLMAN.

In the first sentence of the first quotation, “Your lady wife will lay these tea-cosies and penwipers aside,” the speaker uses “will” to express simple futurity: for the sake of courtesy, he treats the lady wife’s future act as

if she herself wished it. For the sake of courtesy, too, he uses "will" in the third sentence; and for the sake of modesty he uses "will" in the second, in which the subject of the verb represents inanimate things.

In the second quotation, "shall" in "she shall have him," like "will" in "I will make her happy," expresses volition on the part of the speaker, who professes to have control over the destiny of the person represented by "she," and intends to compel her to comply with his wishes. Another example of the imperative quality of "shall" in the third person occurs in the following passage: —

<i>Sicinius.</i>	It is a mind
That shall remain a poison where it is,	
Not poison any further.	
<i>Coriolanus.</i>	Shall remain!
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? mark you	
His absolute "shall"? — SHAKSPERE. ¹	

Sometimes "will" in the third person expresses more than simple futurity with an implication of willingness on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb: it expresses in full force the original meaning of "will" as a word of fixed determination: —

First, then, a woman will or won't, depend on't;
If she will do't, she will; and there's an end on't. — AARON HILL.

In other cases, volition and futurity are mingled in varying degrees.

A peculiar use of "will" in the third person is that in which "will" refers, not to anything in the future, but to a habit: *e.g.* "He will sit by the river all day, and come home content if he but catches one fish."

One use of "shall" that is often found in old writers is comparatively infrequent in modern English: *e.g.* "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Psalms xxiii. 6). "Shall follow me," to borrow Sir

¹ Coriolanus, iii. 1.

Edmund Head's words,¹ "means 'are destined to follow me by the divine ordinance'"; that is, the writer is prophesying. A prophecy by its very nature precludes any idea of courtesy or of discourtesy, for the speaker does not profess to control destiny; "shall" is, therefore, correct. Modern examples of the prophetic "shall" occur in the last stanza of Mr. Kipling's "L'Envoi" in "The Seven Seas": —

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!

Akin to the use of "shall" in prophecy is the use of it in the second or the third person to express a promise. There is, however, one important difference between a prophecy and a promise: in a prophecy the speaker professes no control over the event, in a promise he does profess such control. Examples of promises are: —

You shall have gold

To pay the petty debt twenty times over. — SHAKSPERE.²

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. — PSALMS xci. 11.

The most common form of error in the use of "shall" and "will" in declarative sentences is shown in the following examples: —

I

I am expecting a few young people to dance on Saturday, and shall be happy to see you also.

We shall have to go.

II

I am expecting a few young people to dance on Saturday, and *will* be happy to see you also.

We *will* have to go.

In each of these examples, the writer means to express simple futurity; "I [*or* we] shall" is, then, correct.

Since this form of error consists in the use of *will* in-

¹ In his excellent little book, "Shall and Will."

² The Merchant of Venice, iii. 2.

stead of "shall" to express simple futurity, mistakes are most frequent in the first person. The opposite error — the use of *shall* in the second or the third person when "will" is the proper word — is, however, sometimes committed, especially by foreigners : —

I

"Why don't they carry away the rubbish?"

"They probably will."

Messrs. Siegel and Co. are now reoccupying their former premises, where they will be pleased to welcome their former patrons.

II

"Why don't they carry away the rubbish?"

"They probably *shall*."

Messrs. Siegel and Co. are now reoccupying their former premises, where they *shall* be pleased to welcome their former patrons.

The interrogative forms that express simple futurity are "shall I?" "shall you?" "will he?" In the first person interrogative, as in the first person declarative,¹ no discourtesy can be implied by the use of "shall." In the second person, though courtesy demands "will" in a declarative sentence,¹ "shall" is correct in an interrogative; for the fact that a question is asked, not an assertion made, shows that the matter is in the hands of the person addressed. In the third person, "will" is correct; for *shall* would entirely disregard the feelings of the person about whom the question is asked.

The interrogative forms that imply volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb are "will you?" "will he?" In the first person, an interrogative form of this class is rarely used; for "will I?" means "is it my intention?" — in most cases an absurd question. Sometimes, however, "will I?" or "will I!" is correctly used to echo a question asked by another person : —

"Will you, my sister, be my sister on this awful occasion?"

"Will I!" repeated I. . . . "Indeed I will." — RICHARDSON.

Sometimes the negative "will I not," "won't I," is used as an exclamation to imply the positive "I will": *e.g.* "Won't

¹ See page 159.

I make things hum!" Sometimes, for the sake of civility, the interrogative "will we not?" "won't we?" is put after the assertive (or declarative) "we will," or the interrogative "will we?" after the assertive "we will not," "we won't," in order to ask incidentally the assent of the person or persons, besides the speaker, included in "we": *e.g.* "If I ever had such right on the score of cousinship, I have lost it on the score of —; but we won't mind that, will we, Alice?" (Trollope).

"Will you?" implies volition on the part of the person represented by "you."

"Will he?" may express either simple futurity or volition on the part of the person represented by "he"; the tone of voice or the context will show which is intended. "Shall he?" means "is it your will that he shall?" and is to be used when we wish to imply that the answer to the question lies within the volition of the person or persons addressed.

When a question is asked in either the second or the third person, the auxiliary that is expected in the answer should be used in the question. For example: —

Shall you go away in September? — I shall. (Futurity.)

Will you go to Moosehead with me? — I will. (Volition.)

Will your brother be there? — He will. (Futurity.)

He doesn't wish to go, but will he? — He will. (Volition of the person represented by the subject of the verb.)

Shall he be allowed to sacrifice his pleasure? — He shall not. (Volition of the person addressed in the question.)

When, as sometimes happens, a question introduced by an interrogative pronoun is so indefinite as to preclude any idea of compulsion, "shall" becomes a simple future in the third person: *e.g.* "'Both dead!' said the venerable man. 'Then who shall divulge the secret?'" (Hawthorne); "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew xvi. 26).

The most common forms of error in the use of "shall"

and “will” in interrogative sentences are shown in the following examples : —

I	II
Where shall I find that book?	Where <i>will</i> I find that book?
How long shall we have to wait?	How long <i>will</i> we have to wait?
Shall you be able to be comfortable with them?	<i>Will</i> you be able to be comfortable with them?

In each of these questions, “shall” is correct; for the writer does not mean to imply the exercise of volition.

In a dependent clause, the correct auxiliary is not always that which would be proper if the clause were independent; but the rule of courtesy still holds, and is, in fact, the readiest means of determining whether “shall” or “will” should be used.

If the dependent clause has the same subject as the principal clause, “shall” is, in all three persons, the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity, “will” to express volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the two clauses.

Simple futurity is correctly expressed in the following quotations : —

This letter, it seems, she has put in her pocket. But I hope I shall soon find it deposited with the rest. — RICHARDSON.

“You, my dear,” said she, “believe you shall be unhappy if you have Mr. Solmes.” — RICHARDSON.

Julia says she shall be quite as happy at Bath. — LANDOR.

In “I hope I shall,” “You believe . . . you shall,” “Julia says she shall,” since in each case the two clauses have the same subject, the matter is evidently in the hands of the person represented by that subject; “shall,” therefore, cannot express compulsion, and is a simple future.

Volition is correctly expressed in the following quotations : —

Now I have somebody to stand by me — I tell you once for all, Nettie, I will not go on the 24th. — MRS. OLIPHANT.

Glencora, will you listen to me, or will you not? If you say that you will not, I shall know what to do. — TROLLOPE.

A man determines that he will look at such an object. — JOSEPH BUTLER.

In "I tell you . . . I will," "you say that you will not," "A man determines that he will," the matter is evidently, in each case, in the hands of the person represented by the subject of the two clauses, and "will" implies the voluntary determination, or volition, of that person.

The most common form of error in the use of "shall" and "will" in dependent clauses that have each the same subject as the principal clause is shown in the following examples: —

I

I trust I shall always be able to do something, small or great.

You seem to be quite certain that you shall not be ill.

Professor Black says that he shall be busy for at least a week.

II

I trust I *will* always be able to do something, small or great.

You seem to be quite certain that you *will* not be ill.

Professor Black says that he *will* be busy for at least a week.

In each of these examples, since the two clauses in question have the same subject, and since the writer means to express futurity, not volition, "shall" is correct, as we readily see if we imagine what the person represented by the subject would say if he were speaking directly. The use of *will* in such sentences is an error that needs to be especially guarded against.

If the dependent clause has a different subject from that of the principal clause, and if there is nothing in the nature of the sentence to relieve the imperative quality of "shall" in the second or the third person, the distinction between "shall" and "will" is the same as in independent clauses; that is, "I shall," "you will," "he will," express simple futurity, and "I will," "you shall," "he shall," imply the exercise of volition on the part either of the speaker or of the person represented by the subject of the principal clause.

Simple futurity is correctly expressed in the following quotations from Trollope's "Can You Forgive Her?":—

The chances are that I shall remain as I am till I'm carried to my grave.

I'm afraid you will find us rather dull.

I'm sure that he will be there, though nobody has told me.

In each of these quotations, as will readily be seen, the question of courtesy is the same that it would be if the clause in which "shall" or "will" stands were independent.

In dependent clauses like those just quoted, "will" may express, in the second and the third person, volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the clause:—

On my knees I beg

That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food. — SHAKSPERE.¹

And if she won't take you, at last, Grey? Upon my word, I don't think she ever will. — TROLLOPE.

Volition on the part of the speaker is correctly expressed in the following quotations:—

Do you think that I will break bread in a house from whence she has been ignominiously banished? — TROLLOPE.

I declare to you, you shall not go unless I go too. — MRS. OLIPHANT.

Tell him also that the money that he wants shall assuredly be sent to him. — TROLLOPE.

In these quotations, "will" and "shall" are used just as they would be if the clauses in which they stand were independent.

The most common form of error in the use of "shall" and "will" in dependent clauses which have each a different subject from that of the principal clause is shown in the following example:—

I

If I look out of my window,
the chances are that I shall see
boys playing marbles.

II

If I look out of my window,
the chances are that I *will* see
boys playing marbles.

¹ King Lear, ii. 4.

In this example, since the two clauses in question have different subjects, and since the writer means to express futurity, "shall" is correct, as it would be if the clause in which it stands were independent.

If the dependent clause is in the nature of a condition, the conditional element destroys the compulsory element in "shall," and makes it a simple future in all three persons.¹ "Will" in a conditional clause implies the exercise of volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the clause.

"Shall" and "will" in conditional clauses are correctly used in the following quotations:—

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? — MATTHEW xvi. 26.

And when² ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled. — MARK xiii. 7.

Haply, when² I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him. — SHAKESPEARE.³

Whenever the pest known as the brown-tail moth shall be discovered in any city or town of the Commonwealth, it shall be the duty of the city or town government to take immediate steps for its extinction. — STATUTES OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In these quotations, the conditions introduced by "if," "when," and "whenever" make "shall" a simple future in each case.

If I will promise not to go there again, will you forgive me now?
You may stand quite alone if you will. — LANDOR.

The younger generation does not want instruction, being perfectly willing to instruct if any one will listen to it. — KIPLING.

In each of these quotations, the condition named depends for its fulfilment on the volition of the person represented

¹ On this point, see Sir Edmund Head's "Shall and Will."

² The conditional "when" is to be distinguished from "when" in such a sentence as "We shall get back at one o'clock, when it will be time for lunch."

³ King Lear, i. 1.

by the subject of the conditional clause; "will" is, therefore, the proper auxiliary.

Closely akin to conditional clauses are those introduced by indefinite relative pronouns: —

Whoever . . . shall now compare the country round Rome with the country round Edinburgh will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of Papal domination. — MACAULAY.

In this quotation, the indefiniteness of the relative precludes the idea of compulsion, and reduces "shall" to a simple future. The "will" of volition might have been used instead of the "shall" of futurity.

For whosoever will save his life shall¹ lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall¹ find it. — MATTHEW xvi. 25.

In this quotation, "will" in each of the relative clauses expresses volition; change this "will" to the "shall" of simple futurity, and you make nonsense.

In a relative clause that refers, not to a specific person or thing, but to any one of a class, "shall" is not compulsory: —

The desire of Russia to possess a port that shall not only be ice-free all the year, but which shall protect by its armaments the outlet of the vast industries which she is developing in that region, is as natural and inevitable as our desire to possess Hong Kong. — LONDON NEWSPAPER.

Change "a port" to "this port," and you must change "shall" to "will" to express simple futurity. "Will" in a general relative clause expresses volition on the part of the person represented by the relative: *e.g.* "The person who will bear much shall¹ have much to bear all the world through" (Richardson).

After a few prohibitory conjunctions, "shall" is used with the force of a subjunctive: —

O, bootless aid! haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire! — SCOTT.

¹ An example of the prophetic "shall." See page 163,

The meaning here is, "haste, lest the sinner expire before you reach him." So far as grammatical construction is concerned, the present subjunctive "expire" might have been used.

If the dependent clause asks an indirect question, the choice between "shall" and "will" is determined by the same considerations that determine it for other dependent clauses, except that, in such a sentence as "You had better ask Mr. Smith where he shall be in June," "shall" is made courteous by the fact that the indirect question is to be answered by the person about whom it is asked.

The most common form of error in the use of "shall" and "will" in indirect questions is shown in the following example: —

I

While he is wondering how long he shall live in this way, a great wagon arrives.

II

While he is wondering how long he *will* live in this way, a great wagon arrives.

In this example, since the indirect question has the same subject as the clause on which it depends, "shall," not *will*, is the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity, which is manifestly the idea intended.

For convenience, the ordinary uses of "shall" and "will" may be exhibited as follows: —

I. IN INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

Simple futurity

I shall }
you will } go
he will }

Volition of the speaker

I will }
you shall } go
he shall }

Volition of the subject¹

shall I }
shall you } go?
will he }

will you }
will he } go?

¹ That is, of the person represented by the subject of the verb.

II. IN DEPENDENT CLAUSES

Simple futurity

I think I shall
 you think you shall } hear
 he thinks he shall }

*Volition of the subject*¹

I am determined that I will
 you are determined that you will } hear
 he is determined that he will }

Volition of the speaker

you think [*or* he thinks] I shall
 I think [*or* he thinks] you will² } hear
 I think [*or* you think] he will² }

*Volition of the subject*¹

if I shall } hear
 if you shall }
 if he shall }

if I will } hear
 if you will }
 if he will }

Use “shall” to express simple futurity when courtesy does not forbid; when courtesy forbids “shall,” use “will.”

Use “will” to express volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb; “shall,” except in the first person, to express volition on the part of the speaker.

“Should” or “Would”?—The choice between “should” and “would” is usually determined by considerations similar to those which determine the choice between “shall” and “will”; that is, the uses of “should” correspond to those of “shall,” the uses of “would” to those of “will.”

In the following quotations, “should” and “would” are correctly used in independent clauses:—

I should never in the least dream of accusing you of flirting.—
 HENRY JAMES.

No, no! You would go into Edinburgh anxious, and we could not let you know that he had got the express to stop. Just stay where you are.—MRS. OLIPHANT.

She could not now, in the first hours of her joy, bring herself to bear all the archdeacon’s congratulations. He would have so much to say, and would be so tedious in saying it.—TROLLOPE.

¹ That is, of the person represented by the subject of the verb.

² Also used to imply volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the dependent verb.

In these quotations, "I should," "You would," "He would," correspond to the simple futures "I shall," "you will," "he will."¹ There is no idea of volition.

"I always would have a good horse, you know," said the old gentleman. — GEORGE ELIOT.

You would never allow me to go skating in the evening.

She knew this, and felt a sort of joy in knowing it; and yet she would not come to his aid. — TROLLOPE.

In each of these quotations, "would" implies the exercise, in past time, of volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb.¹

I

I should hate very much to fail in the course, for I have only two more years.

If I had expected to stay at home, I should not have needed a ticket.

On this hypothesis, we should expect to find trout in the Charles.

In each of these examples, "should" is correct; for the writer does not mean to imply the exercise of volition.

I

As a friend, I should like to make a suggestion.

I should be willing to hazard a guess that Professor Blo cannot read my writing.

I should prefer heavier forks than these.

II

I *would* hate very much to fail in the course, as I have only two more years.

If I had expected to stay at home, I *would* not have needed a ticket.

On this hypothesis, we *would* expect to find trout in the Charles.

II

As a friend, I *would* like to make a suggestion.

I *would* be willing to hazard a guess that Professor Blo cannot read my writing.

I *would* prefer heavier forks than these.

Volition is here so fully expressed by the verbs "like," "be willing," "prefer," as not to need expression by the auxiliary verb; "should," not *would*, is therefore correct.

In the following quotations, "should" and "would" are correctly used in interrogative sentences: —

¹ See page 159.

Therefore all the wild elephants to-night will — but why should I waste wisdom on a river-turtle? — KIPLING.

Why should you want to speak evil of me to Miss Dale? — TROLLOPE.

Would he like me to speak to him? — HENRY JAMES.

In these quotations, “should I?” “should you?” “Would he?” correspond to the simple futures “shall I?” “shall you?” “will he?”¹ There is no idea of volition.

If I had the power to take anything from her, would I do it? — TROLLOPE.

“Would you have me repeat to you all the bloody details of that terrible scene?” she said. — TROLLOPE.

Would she go with you if I could get some one to stay with her, mother?

In each of these quotations, “would” implies the exercise, in past time, of volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb.²

I

How should I know which road to take?

Should you be inclined to try him, if you were I?

II

How *would* I know which road to take?

Would you be inclined to try him, if you were I?

In each of these examples, “should” is correct; for the writer does not mean to imply the exercise of volition.

In the following quotations, “should” and “would” are correctly used in dependent clauses that have each the same subject as the principal clause: —

I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it. — GEORGE ELIOT.

You thought then that you should be away all summer.

To this my girl replied that she should have no objection, if she could do it with honour. — GOLDSMITH.

In “I thought I should,” “You thought . . . you should,” “my girl replied that she should,” the use of “should” corresponds to the use of “shall” in “I hope

¹ See page 164.

² See pages 164-165.

I shall," "You believe . . . you shall," "Julia says she shall," discussed on page 166. There is no idea of volition.

I thought I would go and tell him the news.

Do you mean you wouldn't have come for him alone?—HENRY JAMES.

She was determined that she would speak.—TROLLOPE.

In each of these quotations, "would" implies the exercise, in past time, of volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of both clauses.¹

I

I accordingly suggested that I should be more useful farther down the river.

You said that you should be twenty-one to-day.

They were led to suppose that in staying at Mr. Hardcastle's house they should be at an inn.

He had always thought he should like to be a minister.

II

I accordingly suggested that I *would* be more useful farther down the river.

You said that you *would* be twenty-one to-day.

They were led to suppose that in stopping at Mr. Hardcastle's house they *would* be at an inn.

He had always thought he *would* like² to be a minister.

In each of these examples, since the dependent clause has the same subject as the principal clause, and since the writer does not mean to imply the exercise of volition, "should" is correct. The use of *would* in such sentences, like the similar use of *will*,¹ is a very common error.

I

Then it occurred to me that I should never be able to teach him, as I wanted to do.

II

Then it occurred to me that I *would* never be able to teach him, as I wanted to do.

In this example, "it occurred to me" is practically "I thought"; "should" is, then, as in the preceding examples, the proper auxiliary.

In the following quotations, "should" and "would" are

¹ See page 167.

² See page 173.

correctly used in dependent clauses that have each a different subject from that of the principal clause :—

“I see,” Mr. Sandford said at last, “you thought it very unlikely that I should sell it at all.”—MRS. OLIPHANT.

I knew thou wouldst be his death.—SHAKSPEARE.¹

I knew that we should either go to the bottom together or that she would be the making of me.

In “you thought . . . that I should,” “I knew thou wouldst,” “I knew . . . that she would,” “should” and “would” are used as “shall” and “will” are used in “The chances are that I shall,” “I’m afraid you will,” “I’m sure that he will,” discussed on page 168. There is no idea of volition.

It is the bishop’s wish that you should touch nothing.—TROLLOPE.

The parliament resolved that all pictures should be burned.—MACAULAY.

In these quotations, “should” implies the exercise of volition on the part of the bishop and the parliament.²

I

You might have known that I should fall.

Mr. Collins said that he hoped she would come to her senses.

II

You might have known that I *would* fall.

Mr. Collins said that he hoped she *should* come to her senses.

In each of these examples, since the two clauses in question have different subjects, the auxiliary should correspond to that which would be used if the clause in which it stands were independent (as “I shall fall,” “She will come to her senses”).

In the following quotations, “should” and “would” are correctly used in conditional or hypothetical clauses :—

Macbeth. If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth.

We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

And we’ll not fail.—SHAKSPEARE.³

¹ *Troilus and Cressida*, iv. 2.

² See page 168.

³ *Macbeth*, i. 7.

If you should say with *me* in particular, why there might be something in it. — HENRY JAMES.

Even then she walked up towards it rather timidly, saying to herself, "Suppose it should be raving mad after all!" — LEWIS CARROLL.

In these quotations, the conditional or hypothetical element, by destroying all idea of compulsion, makes "should" correct in the second and the third person as well as in the first. "Should" in conditional clauses is far more common than "shall."¹

He would treat me in the same way to-morrow if I would let him. — TROLLOPE.

You cannot kill them if you would. — TROLLOPE.

If Eleanor would go away in dudgeon with the archdeacon, why should she let all the servants and all the neighborhood know that she had done so? — TROLLOPE.

In these quotations, "if I would," "if you would," "If Eleanor would," express conditional volition.¹

After the prohibitory conjunction "lest," and such prohibitory expressions as "God forbid," "should," like "shall," is used with the force of a subjunctive:²—

With most men at such a moment there is a little nervousness, some fear of making a bad start, a dread lest others should have more of the success of the hunt than falls to them. — TROLLOPE.

God forbid that I should wish them sever'd. — SHAKSPERE.³

Forbid it, Heaven, that it should come to this! — COLERIDGE.

In a few other instances, which may best be learned from examples, "should" is used with the force of a subjunctive:—

It is no doubt highly desirable that the text of ancient poetry should be given untouched and uncorrupted. — SCOTT.

"It is much better as it is," he said. "It is much better that you should be as strangers for the future." — TROLLOPE.

It is no shame in a man that he should be as nice about his country as about his sweetheart. — LOWELL.

¹ See pages 169-170.

² See page 170.

³ 3 Henry VI, iv. 1.

In each of these quotations, the impersonal nature of the principal clause destroys the compulsory element in "should."

"Should" is often used in its original sense of "ought":—

That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this "would" changes.

— SHAKSPERE.¹

Really you should have a lady's-maid! — LEWIS CARROLL.

Even a joke should have some meaning. — LEWIS CARROLL.

"Would" is sometimes used to express a wish:—

Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! —

² SAMUEL xviii. 33.

To denote a habit, "would" is far more common than "will":²—

When our visitors would say, "Well, upon my word, Mrs. Primrose, you have the finest children in the whole country,"—"Ay, neighbour," she would answer, "they are as Heaven made them." — GOLDSMITH.

From time to time a greenish wave of the Northern Lights would roll across the hollow of the high heavens, flick like a flag, and disappear; or a meteor would crackle from darkness to darkness, trailing a shower of sparks behind. — KIPLING.

Note that the uses of "should" correspond, in the main, to those of "shall," the uses of "would" to those of "will."³

EXERCISE LXVIII

Make a table of the ordinary uses of "should" and "would" similar to that showing the uses of "shall" and "will."⁴

EXERCISE LXIX

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the word in parenthesis and with that which precedes:—

1. You will (shall) repent of this before the day is over.
2. He will (shall) not go to the woods alone.

¹ Hamlet, iv. 7.

² See page 162.

³ See page 172.

⁴ See pages 171-172.

3. Shall (will) you go to the symphony concert to-night?
4. Will (shall) he be allowed his freedom?
5. We shall (will) do all in our power to prevent such a catastrophe.
6. We should (would) not go if we were invited.
7. Should (would) they be permitted to drive a lame horse?
8. He would (should) start in spite of the danger.
9. He said that there would (should) be no charge.
10. They would (should), at least, thank you for such trouble.
11. They thought that I should (would) go back to my own people.
12. I shall (will) make so clever a messenger that you will (shall) be glad of my service.
13. He assured us that no harm should (would) befall us.
14. I shall (will) be mayor of Greater New York, and shall (will) serve out my term.
15. I sometimes think that I will (shall) never go into society again.
16. He replied that he should (would) not lie, whatever I said.
17. I shall (will) be drowned; nobody will (shall) save me.
18. You said that you should (would) come on the 24th.

EXERCISE LXX

Insert in each blank the proper auxiliary, "shall" or "will"; give the reason for your choice:—

1. Any man or woman who —, may, in this country, find work and daily bread.
2. "If we go on like this," said Grace, "we — only kill ourselves. I — stop if you —."
3. I — gladly do anything in my power.
4. I — be glad to do anything in my power.
5. It has been arranged that the Chinese viceroy — pay a visit. He — be the guest of the Duke of Devonshire.
6. I have no more doubt that we — go to war than I have that I — live till next week.
7. — you take your overcoat? or do you think you — not need it? I think you —.
8. I believe you — never be serious about anything.
9. It may be that we — all meet in February; it may be also that we — not.
10. Don't call me, whoever — come to see me.
11. If you make a noise, you — not go.

12. — you give me your hand upon it that you — do your best?
13. I wonder if I — ever have time to put a few autobiographical bits down before I die.
14. The president may do the same if he —.
15. We — think of nothing sad to-day, — we?
16. How much longer — I have to wait?
17. How long — my patience hold out?
18. Where — I find the best biography of Donald G. Mitchell?
19. If the other lady — alight, I — be pleased to have you walk into the barn.
20. I am determined that I — not come out last.
21. I am determined that he — not come again.
22. I think that he — remember me after this.
23. I mean that he — remember me.
24. He — be eighty in June.
25. He tells me that he — be eighty in June.
26. He — sit by the hour on the bank, holding a fishing-rod.
27. You think that I — not be able to turn the horse round.
28. Do you suppose that I — lie about it?
29. I can't help it; if they — go, they —.

EXERCISE LXXI

Insert in each blank the proper auxiliary, "should" or "would"; give the reason for your choice:—

1. I think that, if I had continued as I began, I — have a very commendable style by this time.
2. — you be surprised to hear that such an honor had been conferred on him?
3. I — like to prophesy that all the St. Louis ladies will (shall) take to botanizing this spring.
4. She felt sure she — catch a bad cold.
5. — you happen to meet Mr. Brown while you are in San Francisco, you — oblige me greatly by saying to him that I shall (will) not be able to come before June.
6. On rainy afternoons he — read to us by the hour; then, when it grew dark, we — all sing.
7. If you — go by train, you — arrive a day sooner.
8. He — have been paid, and I — also, if the treasurer had been at home.

9. I hoped that he — not come to-day; but I — be disappointed if he did not come at all.
10. If he — come to-morrow, — you be willing to see him?
11. It was agreed that Mrs. Bingham — call on Mrs. Fairfax.
12. She thought she — like to return to Arlington.
13. If the reading of the book had not been required, I — probably never have finished it.
14. He said that he — have her, that nothing — prevent him.
15. There is no reason why you — expect to have your own way in everything.
16. If I could give you a vote, you — have one.
17. I — not for the world you — think I was mixed up with them.
18. It had not occurred to me to think that you — prevaricate.
19. Mrs. Lindsay was saying only the other day how glad she — be if you — stay with her for a fortnight.
20. I — think that a woman of such personal charm — keep her actions at a high level.
21. He replied that he — be greatly surprised at such a result.
22. He replied that such a result — greatly surprise him.
23. How — we know that there had ever been a quarrel?
24. — you believe it? I have read Horace again.
25. It began to look as if I — not go at all.
26. You knew that I — keep your secret.
27. I promised that I — go.

EXERCISE LXXII

Examine the following sentences as regards the use of “shall” and “will,” “should” and “would”; point out the instances of correct, and those of incorrect, use:—

1. I think that, if we carefully weigh all the facts in our minds, we will alter our opinion.
2. He said that he would be obliged to borrow the money.
3. One should think that all this would have some effect on him.
4. I tell you that you shall have all the money you need.
5. Then St. Peter comes in and tells how he will miss Lycidas.
6. She gently touched his shoulder, saying, “You promised that this would not happen again.”

7. I fear that I shall hardly be able to come, but I shall live in hope that we will meet somewhere soon.

8. I know that I never will forget these lines of Milton.

9. There, there is the man I slew; am I an angel or am I a devil? will I dwell in bliss seraphic or writhe in hell eternal?

10. If I knew her address, I would write to her.

11. In our times, we would think that Shylock was treated far too harshly.

12. Then, as Portia goes on and he sees that he will be lucky if he escapes with his life, his despair becomes greater and greater.

13. Write a theme which shall contain about two hundred words.

14. We should be much pleased if you would decide the question.

15. I should, at least I hope I should, have done such a thing.

16. Antonio obtained this amount under one condition only — that, if this sum of money were not repaid on the day the note was due, he (Shylock) would be permitted to cut a pound of Antonio's flesh.

17. She keeps up her spirits with hope, that elixir of life in distress, and wakes each morning with the thought, "To-day will I see him, to-day will he clasp me once more to his breast."

18. If my friends find no difficulty in travelling so far to see me, I am sure I will find none in accommodating them.

19. Margaret and I shall be as much benefited by it as you.

20. My *protégé*, as you call him, is a sensible man; and sense will always have attractions for me.

21. My uncle, thinking that he would be entertained better here than at an inn, decided to ask hospitality.

Questions of Tense. — Among the most perplexing questions connected with verbs are those which concern the choice between one tense and another.

I

Mr. Whirl regrets that a previous engagement prevents him from accepting Mrs. Smith's invitation to dinner on Monday.

II

Mr. Whirl regrets that a previous engagement *will prevent* him from accepting Mrs. Smith's invitation to dinner on Monday.

If Mr. Whirl's "previous engagement" is in existence when he writes his note, it prevents him at that time from accepting Mrs. Smith's invitation.

I

DEAR MRS. LEE, — I am sorry to say that I cannot accept your kind invitation, as I expect to be absent from the city on Friday.

II

DEAR MRS. LEE, — I am sorry to say that absence from the city *will prevent* me from accepting your kind invitation for Friday.

The writer means to say that he cannot at the time of writing accept the invitation, for the reason that he expects to be absent from the city at the time of the entertainment. His absence may be a fact of the future, but his inability to accept the invitation is a fact of the present.

I

Mr. Curron accepts with pleasure Mrs. Holl's kind invitation for Tuesday evening.

II

Mr. Curron *will be* happy to accept Mrs. Holl's kind invitation for Tuesday evening.

When will Mr. Curron be happy to accept? Does he write a note now to say that he means to accept at some future time, and that, when he does accept, his happiness will begin? Or does he mean that he is happy while writing his acceptance? This use of the future tense is common in answers to notes of invitation, but it is not supported by the best usage.

A frequent question with regard to tenses is, "Shall I say 'To-morrow is Tuesday' or 'To-morrow will be Tuesday'?" 'To-morrow is the seventeenth' or 'To-morrow will be the seventeenth'?" Either form is correct. When we say "is," we are thinking of to-morrow as the day otherwise known as Tuesday or the seventeenth; when we say "will be," we are thinking of to-morrow as the day that will come after to-day.

I

DEAR SIR, — I did not attend school on Friday, as I had to go to New York on important business. Will you kindly excuse my absence? This is the second time I have been absent this term.

II

DEAR SIR, — I did not attend school on Friday, as I had to go to New York on important business. Will you kindly excuse my absence? This *was* the second time I *had* been absent this term.

The meaning of the last sentence is, "This makes my second absence." The absence occurred in past time, but the assertion about it belongs to the present.

I

Nothing is more interesting than the attempt to trace the fortunes of men who died long ago.

This case still awaits evidence as to the origin of the injury to the left hand, as you were informed by letters from this office, dated June 6, 1887, and Feb. 5, 1888.

II

Nothing is more interesting than the attempt to trace the fortunes of men who *have* died long ago.

This case still awaits evidence as to the origin of injury to the left hand, as you *have been* informed by letters from this office dated June 6, 1887, and Feb. 5, 1888.

If these sentences had ended at "died" and "informed," "have died" and "have been informed" would have been correct; for the perfect tense marks an act as finished with reference to the present. The words after "died" and "informed" make the preterite tense correct; for the preterite indicates that the writer is speaking of past time, with no reference to the present.

I

Every time we relieve ourselves of a disagreeable task by a slight prevarication, we yield to temptation and make deceit a part of our nature.

II

Every time we relieve ourselves of a disagreeable task by a slight prevarication, we *have yielded* to temptation and *have made* deceit a part of our nature.

The verbs "yield" and "make" refer to the same point of time as "relieve," and should therefore be in the same tense.

I

Thackeray was of a quiet disposition, and could not bring himself to scoff at Swift.

II

Thackeray was of a quiet disposition, and *can* not bring himself to scoff at Swift.

If the preterite tense is used in the first of two coordinate clauses that refer to the same time, it should be used in the second.

I

Gulliver managed by swimming to reach the shore. Worn out by his exertion, he crawled up the beach, lay down, and fell asleep.

Gulliver manages by swimming to reach the shore. Worn out by his exertion, he *crawls* up the beach, *lies* down, and *falls* asleep.

Under this inspiration we made up some of the distance we had lost. The shouting on the shore became deafening, showing us that we were almost through. "Now, then," cried the captain, "one more spurt and we win!" But only two men could answer to the captain's call, — the stroke oar and the giant of the crew.

In each of the passages under II, the writer apparently tries to slip from the preterite tense into what is called the "historical present" (that is, the present tense as used in speaking of an event in past time); in the second passage, he returns unexpectedly to the preterite. A writer should never use the historical present unless his interest in his narrative is so intense that the past has become present to his imagination; but if he once introduces it, he should keep to it till a break in the narrative renders a change of tense natural.

I

A guarantee is sometimes given that the collection shall amount to a specified sum.

After "is" in the principal clause, "shall," not *should*, is correct in the dependent clause; for the tense of the verb in a dependent clause should accord with the tense of the principal verb. We say, for example:—

II

Gulliver managed by swimming to reach the shore. Worn out by his exertion, he *crawls* up the beach, *lies* down, and *falls* asleep.

Under this inspiration we made up some of the distance we had lost. The shouting on the shore *becomes* deafening, showing us that we *are* almost through. "Now, then," *cries* the captain, "one more spurt and we win!" But only two men could answer to the captain's call,— the stroke oar, and the giant of the crew.

II

A guarantee is sometimes given that the collection *should* amount to a specified sum.

I know I can do it.
 I think he will be here.
 I ask that I may know.
 I have asked that I may know.
 I shall ask if I wish to know.

I knew I could do it.
 I thought he would be here.
 I asked that I might know.
 I had asked that I might know.
 I should ask if I wished to know.
 I should have asked if I had wished to know.

It must not be inferred from these sentences that an arbitrary rule for the sequence of tenses can be laid down; for the question is always one of meaning. Thus, we may say with equal correctness, "I wish that Victorian would come," "I did wish that Victorian would come," or "I could have wished that Victorian would come." The first is a wish of the present, the other two are wishes of the past; but, relatively to the time of wishing, the time expressed by "would come" is in all three cases the same.

I

Samuel would have been contented, if the condition of his father's health had not troubled him so much.

II

Samuel would have been contented, if the condition of his father's health *did not trouble* him so.

As the verb in the dependent clause refers to the same time as that in the principal clause, "had not troubled" is correct. "Did not trouble" would have been proper if "would be contented" had been used in the principal clause.

I

It was a question with me whether scientific tastes denote a higher type of mind than æsthetic tastes.

II

It was a question with me whether scientific tastes *denoted* a higher type of mind than æsthetic tastes.

When, as in this example, a dependent clause expresses a general truth into which the idea of time does not enter, the verb of that clause is usually in the present tense, even though the verb of the principal clause is in a past tense.

Sometimes, however, in such a clause, a past tense is justified by what is called "tense-attraction"; that is, the

tense of the dependent verb follows the tense of the verb on which it depends. Thus, in the sentence "If all persons were equally beautiful, the race would hardly know what beauty was," "was" is said to be attracted into the preterite tense by "would know." In such a sentence, the present tense would be preferred by many writers; but often the preterite is the only tense that seems natural, especially in indirect narration: *e.g.* "He said that the lake was shallow now," "He replied that a man could not eat his cake and have it too." The first of these sentences contains a fact of the present, the second a general truth; but neither present fact nor general truth is expressed as such, — each is given as an assertion by somebody. The difference between a general truth expressed as such and the same truth expressed as an assertion by somebody is shown in the dependent clauses of the following sentences: "This proved to me that virtue is its own reward"; "On my saying that such conduct deserved a reward, he replied that virtue was its own reward." In the first sentence, "virtue is its own reward" is given as a general truth which the author of the sentence accepts; in the second sentence, the same truth is given merely as an assertion by somebody.

I

It was the business of Harvard to be on the lookout, and to secure all the glory it could.

She would have had to assign some cause for the outburst.

He would never have complained if he had not been permitted to see her till the wedding day.

II

It was Harvard's business to *have been* on the lookout, and to *have secured* all the glory it could.

She would have had to *have assigned* some cause for the outburst.

He would never have complained if he had not been permitted to *have seen* her till the wedding day.

To have been, to have secured, to have assigned, to have seen, imply that the subordinate phrase in each case refers to a time earlier than that referred to in the principal clause. In the first sentence under II, for instance, what

the writer says is that Harvard should have been on the lookout before the event referred to; but what he means is that Harvard should have been on the lookout at the time of the event. In sentences like these, the present infinitive is, according to the best modern usage, preferable to the perfect. Properly used, the present infinitive implies that a speaker or a writer places himself at the point of time indicated by the principal verb, and looks either to the present or to the future; the perfect infinitive implies that he places himself at a time later than that of the act or state expressed by the infinitive, and contemplates that act or state as completed. In the sentence "At the end of the three days allowed in the ultimatum, war was formally declared to have begun," the perfect infinitive, not the present, is correct; for the meaning is that the war had begun before the formal declaration was made.

It is [*or was*] a pleasure to pass my examinations so well.

It is [*or was*] a pleasure to have passed my examinations so well.

Both of these sentences are correct, but they differ in meaning. "To pass my examinations so well is [*or was*] a pleasure," means that my pleasure lies (or lay) in the fact that I am (or was) passing my examinations so well: my examinations are (or were) in progress. "To have passed my examinations so well is [*or was*] a pleasure," means that my pleasure lies (or lay) in the fact that I have (or had) passed my examinations so well: my examinations are (or were) over.

Sometimes the perfect infinitive is used to emphasize the assertion that an act is completed, is a thing of the past. I may say with equal propriety, "I am looking for a man who meant to come by this train" and "I am looking for a man who meant to have come by this train"; but if I choose the latter form, I emphasize, not the man's intention, but his non-appearance,—he was to have come but has not.

I

I expected to go, but was prevented at the last moment.

II

I expected *to have gone*, but was prevented at the last moment.

Verbs like "expect" and "intend," which look to the future, require the present infinitive.

I

The Calves' Head Club was said by obscure pamphleteers to have been founded by Milton.

II

The Calves' Head Club was said by obscure pamphleteers *to be founded* by Milton.

In this example, the perfect infinitive is correct; for the founding of the club antedated the assertion by "obscure pamphleteers."

Use the tense that expresses your meaning exactly.

EXERCISE LXXIII

Which expression is preferable, that in parenthesis or that which precedes? —

1. We just passed a building which had (has) a tablet in the wall; can you tell me what the inscription on it is (was)?

2. He impressed on us the truth that honesty is (was) the best policy.

3. He said that though he felt all the time that honesty is (was) his best policy, he really didn't (doesn't) know how to be honest.

4. As a steamer was to have started (to start) for Palermo that very evening, he at once engaged a berth.

5. If you would only ask when you are (were) in doubt, it will (would) be much better.

6. Where did you say Pikes Peak is (was)?

7. I intended to do (to have done) it yesterday.

8. Would he have been willing to go (to have gone) with you?

9. Carrie knew that water is (was) composed of two gases.

10. It would not have been difficult to prevent (to have prevented) the disaster.

11. It was harder than I expected it would be (have been).

12. We have done no more than it was our duty to do (to have done).

13. I have written to him so that he may (might) be ready for us.

14. I wrote to him so that he may (might) be ready for us.

15. I reminded him that a rolling stone gathers (gathered) no moss, and he replied that moss was (is) the last thing he wishes (wished) to gather.

16. It will be the hope of every one that the provisions of this act are (will be) carried out.

EXERCISE LXXIV

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the infinitive in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. He ought not to be (to have been) elected.
2. He is said to spend (to have spent) fifteen thousand a year.
3. It is a liberal education to know (to have known) her.
4. He was believed to live (to have lived) a happy life.
5. He ought to go (to have gone).
6. He appeared to be (to have been) crying.
7. Achilles is said to be (to have been) buried here.
8. I am supposed to give (to have given) you some good counsel.
9. I am glad to see (to have seen) Lord Carlingford's letter.

EXERCISE LXXV

Examine the tenses in each passage ; correct any errors in the use of them, and give your reason for each correction : ¹—

[*Extracts from examination books written by candidates for admission to Harvard College.*]

1. Collecting her jewels and taking two bags of ducats, she goes with him, when he departed with Bassanio as his servant.

2. After the dinner, when the wine began to flow, the gentlemen having become talkative tell many stories.

3. She pleads with him to forgive Antonio and to show the world that a Jew had a conscience.

4. Shylock, although a fiend, was treated in such a manner that one can hardly expect he would have any regard for the feelings of others.

¹ Pupils may also be asked to correct the punctuation in these passages.

5. Once I met in Belmont a rich and lovely girl, Portia by name. I loved her and have reason to think that she is not indifferent to my love. I lack money wherewith to make an impression.

6. When Antonio wishes to borrow money from him to lend to his friend Bassanio that Bassanio might fittingly present himself to Portia, Shylock makes Antonio sign a bond declaring that if he should not pay the money on the specified day he would forfeit a pound of his flesh near his heart.

7. He says that the time had come when his money was to be paid back and that now he demanded his bond, namely that he should have a pound of Antonio's flesh. The judge says that Shylock is right and accordingly that Antonio must be prepared to let the Jew cut a pound of flesh, but [that] if in the cutting, one drop of human blood should be spilt, the Jew's goods and lands were confiscated, for so read the bond.

8. Her father had decreed that she could marry no one save the one¹ that² chose the casket with her picture in it. Bassanio does this. Now Shylock had a daughter, Jessica, who was in love with a Christian, Lorenzo. Her father does not like this and so Jessica runs away with Lorenzo. . . . Forced to give up all his property, Shylock is dismissed. Half of his money went to Antonio who generously gave it back. Then Bassanio and Portia were married and Jessica and Lorenzo were reconciled.

[Notes written by Freshmen in Harvard College.]

9. DEAR MR. JONES,—

I shall be pleased to except [sic] your invitation to dinner on Monday, May 1st at a quarter past seven o'clock.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN SMITH.

10. Mr John Smith will be very much pleased to accept Mr Jones's³ kind invitation for dinner on the evening of May the first.

11. MY DEAR MR. JONES

I regret very much that I cannot accept your invitation to dinner on May 1st, but it will be impossible on account of a previous engagement.

Sincerely yours

JOHN SMITH.

¹ See page 121.

² See page 125.

³ See page 45.

12. Mr John Smith regrets exceedingly that he will be unable to accept the kind invitation to dine on Mouday, May the first at seven-thirty.

[*Passages that have appeared in print.*]

13. It is a common mistake to think that the organ required a totally different touch from the piano.

14. That man never lived whose personal appearance cannot be improved by correct attire.

15. Men tremble at his feet; he walks majestically through their streets; he upturns their dens of iniquity; he corrects their abusing; he reforms their customs; he seeks to bring the world to a correct standard of morality; he sought to benefit men; to elevate them.

16. If any one part of their proceedings can be said to deserve less blame than another, it was the singular indiscrimination with which they persecuted . . . people of all ranks.

Indicative or Subjunctive? — The difference between these moods is, in general terms, that the indicative represents what is said as a fact or as assumed to be a fact, whereas the subjunctive represents what is said as conceived by the speaker or the writer but not vouched for by him as true or even as probable. Thus, if the author of the sentence, "No one will wonder that they raise a protest, though it be like the helpless cry of an untaught child," had used the indicative "is" instead of the subjunctive "be," he would have left little room for doubt that he meant to suggest that the protest was like an infant's cry. By using the subjunctive "be," he shows that the clause beginning with "though it be" is equivalent to "though it be (but I do not say that it is) like the helpless cry," etc. : he leaves room for doubt.

Another difference between the indicative and the subjunctive is in the time expressed. The present indicative usually refers to present time, as "If he has a quick temper, he comes honestly by it"; the present subjunctive often refers to future time,¹ as "They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"

¹ See pages 170-171.

(Psalms xci. 12). The preterite indicative (except sometimes in indirect narration) refers to past time, as "Even though the sky was cloudy, we enjoyed the ride"; the preterite subjunctive usually refers to present time, as "If I were there, I should not be here."

Apart from the forms with "thou," which will not be considered, the subjunctive (except of the verb "be," which will be discussed later) differs, in the active voice, from the indicative in one form only—that for the third person singular of the present subjunctive, which is readily distinguishable from the usual corresponding indicative form by the absence of the terminal "s": *e.g.* "if he move" (subjunctive), "if he moves" (indicative). This form of the subjunctive is correctly used in the following citations from recent writers:—

Every bill shall be presented to the governor; if he approve, he shall sign it.

Whether the encounter alienate friends or raise up enemies, whether it be fraught with physical risk or moral danger, whether it lead to defeat or to total ruin, the editor who is worthy of the name will not shrink from the contest.

If but the faintest whisper in your hearts intimate to you that it is not fair, hasten . . . to probe it rigorously.

The subjunctive as used in these quotations appears infrequently in ordinary prose, and has little place in the language of conversation. Colloquially, we should say "approves," "alienates," "raises," "leads," "whispers," instead of "approve," etc. Even in colloquial English, however, the present subjunctive survives in certain phrases that have been in common use since the time when the subjunctive was as frequent in speech as in writing,—phrases like "God forbid," "God bless you," "God save us," "God have mercy," "long live the Queen," "plague take it," "woe betide him," "perish the thought," "come what may." In phrases like these, the subjunctive is almost an imperative.

The present subjunctive, active or passive, is common in votes and resolutions: —

Resolved, That the clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate. — CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Ordered, That a committee of five be appointed to devise further ways and means for defraying the expenses of the ensuing campaign. — SECRET JOURNALS OF CONGRESS.

The present subjunctive of the verb “be” (“be” in all three persons, singular and plural) is used colloquially in certain traditional phrases, — as “God be with you,” “God be my judge,” “be that as it may” “so be it,” — but, except in such phrases, it is much more frequent in literature and in votes and resolutions than in ordinary conversation. An example of correct use in modern writing occurs in a letter from R. L. Stevenson to Mr. J. M. Barrie: —

There is no reason, unless it be in these mysterious tides that ebb and flow, and make and mar and murder the works of poor scribblers, why you should not do work of the best order.

“Unless it be” suggests the possibility that “these mysterious tides” may prevent Mr. Barrie from doing work of the best order; “unless it is” would imply the probability that they would prevent him.

The preterite subjunctive of “be” (“were” in all three persons, singular and plural) is the only subjunctive form that belongs as much to the colloquial as to the literary language. It is a part of the everyday speech of all who use good English. It has four principal uses: (1) to express a wish that something were which is not, as “O that I were at home!” (2) to express a supposition that is contrary to fact, a condition the fulfilment of which is regarded as impossible, as “If I were you, I should not do that”; (3) before an infinitive to express a condition with a greater degree of uncertainty than is expressed by “should,” as “If he were to leave you entirely, you would be sorry”; (4) after “as if” (or “as though”) to express a condition the conclusion to which

is understood, as "He eats as if [that is, as he would eat if] he were hungry." Additional illustrations of these uses occur in the following passages:—

I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!—TENNYSON.

If I were inclined to fear for my own happiness apart from yours (which, as God knows, is a fear that never comes into my head), I should have sense to reason myself clear of it all.—MRS. BROWNING.

But if I were to let you go from me, taking what you have said to me and doing nothing, it would seem that I had accepted your decision as final.—TROLLOPE.

Last year he seemed to walk in just when he liked, as though he were one of us.—TROLLOPE.

I

II

"It must be splendid to be a man," she said suddenly; "I wish I were a man."

"It must be splendid to be a man," she said suddenly; "I wish I *was* a man."

I wish supper were ready.

I wish supper *was* ready.

I wish there were some way in which I could be of service.

I wish there *was* some way in which I could be of service.

In each of these examples, a wish is expressed that something were which is not; the subjunctive is, therefore, correct.

I

II

If I were you, I should stay at home to-day.

If I *was* you, I should stay at home to-day.

If only it were summer, we might go in the pony carriage.

If only it *was* summer, we might go in the pony carriage.

In each of these examples, the "if" clause requires the subjunctive; for it expresses a supposition contrary to fact. The first sentence, for instance, would, if the whole thought were expressed, read thus: "If I were you (but I am not), I should stay at home to-day."

I

II

If I were to get on a step-ladder to talk to grandma, I couldn't make her hear.

If I *was* to get on a step-ladder to talk to grandma, I couldn't make her hear.

In this example, the subjunctive "were" with the infinitive expresses a condition with a greater degree of uncertainty than "should" would do.

I

He speaks English as if it were something else.

The frigate now came tearing along as if she were alive herself and were feeling the fever of the chase.

II

He speaks English as if it *was* something else.

The frigate now came tearing along as if she were alive herself and *was* feeling the fever of the chase.

In each of these examples, the subjunctive expresses a condition the conclusion to which is understood. The first sentence, for instance, would, if the conclusion were expressed, read thus: "He speaks English as he would speak it if it were something else."

The subjunctive, as has already been intimated,¹ is not always required in a clause that is conditional in form merely. When an assertion, though conditional in form, is presented as a fact, the indicative is correct: —

The busy town . . . was quite heedless of what was then passing in the corner of that low, heavy-beamed room. . . . But if the town was heedless, not so were the stars. — GEORGE HENRY LEWES.

He met the deep gentleness of her eyes and reflected that, if she was always beautiful, she was beautiful at different times from different sources. — HENRY JAMES.

In each of these quotations, the "if" clause is hypothetical in form only: the meaning is, "heedless as the town was," "beautiful as she always was."

I

If it is discouraging to notice your own faults in the second generation, it is still more so to encounter idiosyncrasies with which you have no association.

II

If it *be* discouraging to notice one's² own faults in the second generation, it is still more so to encounter idiosyncrasies with which you² have no association.

¹ See page 192.

² See page 131.

In this example, the "if" clause is hypothetical in form only: the full meaning is, "if it is discouraging to notice one's own faults in the second generation (and it is discouraging)"; the indicative is, therefore, correct.

I

When the technique is good, when the skill employed is at all considerable, the work is, we say, a work of art.

II

When the technique is good, when the skill employed *be* at all considerable, the work is, we say, a work of art.

In this example, the indicative is proper in the second clause as well as in the first; for the proposition contained in each clause is assumed to be a fact.

I

If the king's object was to secure their absence, the scheme was well laid.

II

If the king's object *were* to secure their absence, the scheme was well laid.

The meaning of the first clause is, "granting that the king's object was to secure their absence": an assertion about a fact in past time is assumed to be true; the indicative is, then, correct. The subjunctive *were* makes the "if" clause a supposition contrary to fact, referring to present time.

Use the indicative to express facts, the subjunctive to express doubtful or untrue suppositions.

EXERCISE LXXVI

Tell why each mood, indicative or subjunctive, is correctly used:—

1. I can conceive no possible reason for such a refusal unless it be that you are engaged.—TROLLOPE.

2. If Frankfurt was thus representative of the past, it was equally representative of the present.—GEORGE HENRY LEWES.¹

3. He regarded Flossy and her husband with the tolerant gaze of one content to allow other people to work out their salvation without officious criticism, provided he were allowed the same privilege.—ROBERT GRANT.

¹ Quoted in Maetzner's "English Grammar."

4. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. — ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

5. My wife looks as if she were going to cry.

6. She had taught herself to love the man whether he were good or whether he were bad, — whether he were strong-hearted or whether he were fickle. — TROLLOPE.

7. How terrible it would be if you were a saint!

8. If your home were not in Italy, you would feel as I do.

9. Look, how I clutch it,

Lest it fall,

And I a pauper go. — EMILY DICKINSON.

EXERCISE LXXVII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the expression in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. If he is (were) studious, he will (would) excel.

2. Oh, that you may be (were) blameless!

3. Though he deceive (deceives) me, yet will I trust him.

4. Though he deceived (were to deceive) me, yet will (would) I trust him.

5. Though the boy's coat was (were) made of silk, it did (would) not improve his appearance.

EXERCISE LXXVIII

Which expression is preferable, that in parenthesis or that which precedes ? —

1. Giglio came up the steps, looking as pale as if he was (were) going to execution.

2. If I was (were) a good girl when I left you, I hope I am not a bad one now.

3. If I was (were) looking for eggs, I shouldn't want those.

4. I wish my mother was (were) here.

5. If she was (were) at the reception, I did not see her.

6. If he was (were to be) elected, it would be his ruin.

7. A master of hounds, if he have (has) long held the country,— and Sir William had held his for more than thirty years,— obtains a power which that of no other potentate can equal.

8. It seemed to him when they parted that he should be very unhappy if he were (was) not to see her again.

Singular or Plural ?— Everybody who knows anything about English grammar knows that the verb should agree with its subject in number ; but sometimes, especially in conversation, we do not at once perceive what the real subject is, and sometimes when we do recognize it we are not sure whether it is singular or plural.

I

The persecutions of the chapel-bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to six o'clock prayers, interrupt my slumbers no longer.

The whole system of mind-reading, mesmerism, and spiritualism seems connected.

II

The persecutions of the chapel-bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to six o'clock matins, *interrupts* my slumbers no longer.

The whole system of mind-reading, mesmerism, and spiritualism *seem* connected.

In the first example, the subject of the verb is plural, "persecutions"; in the second, it is singular, "system." When, as in these cases, several words come between the subject and the verb, a writer is in danger of forgetting what the real subject is.

I

He, with two of his companions [*or* With two of his companions, he], entered, and was conducted to the hall.

II

He, with two of his companions, entered, and *were* conducted to the hall.

In this example, "were" would be correct if "and" were in the place of "with," for "and" would put the three persons concerned on a level; but in the sentence as it stands "was" is correct, for "with" implies that the phrase "two of his companions" is subordinate to "he," the subject of the verb. There is a similar distinction between

the sentences "John's father and mother have gone to Europe" and "John's mother, with two young children, has gone to Europe."

I

The religion of this period, as well as that of the early Christians, was opposed to any such belief.

The Reverend B. W. Heron, accompanied by his family, has left Paris for Switzerland.

Since the phrases beginning with "as well as" and "accompanied by" are, like the phrase "with two of his companions" in the last example, obviously parenthetical, the verb in each case should be singular.

I

All that they could see of "the Invisible One" was his boots.

What is sought is not more ways of making money, but ways of making more money.

In the first example, had "boots" been the subject, the verb would properly have been plural; but since the phrase beginning with "All" is the subject, the verb should be singular. In the second example, "What," not "ways," is the subject.

I

In literature are embalmed the short stories of the day.

Over his face was the bleach of death, but set upon it were the dark and hard lines of desperate purpose.

There were many things to do.

II

The religion of this period, as well as that of the early Christians, *were* opposed to any such belief.

The Reverend B. W. Heron, accompanied by his family, *have* left Paris for Switzerland.

II

All that they could see of "the Invisible One" *were* his boots.

What *are* sought *are* not more ways of making money, but ways of making more money.

II

In literature *is* embalmed the short stories of the day.

Over his face was the bleach of death, but set upon it *was* the dark and hard lines of desperate purpose.

There *was* many things to do.

The fact that the subject follows the verb instead of coming before it does not affect the operation of the rule

which requires subject and verb to agree in number. In the last example, "there" is an expletive; the real subject is "things."

I

She is one of the writers who are destined to be immortal.

It was one of the most interesting dramas that have been seen in Boston for years.

II

She is one of the writers who *is* destined to be immortal.

It was one of the most interesting dramas that *has* been seen in Boston for years.

In the first example, the antecedent of "who" is "writers"; in the second, the antecedent of "that" is "dramas." In each of the sentences as originally written, the author appears to have had one person or thing so strongly in mind that he failed to notice that the relative pronoun refers, not to that one, but to the class to which that one belongs. Faults of this character, though they violate the strict rules of grammar, are sometimes found in the works of reputable authors; but they are not supported by the best usage.

I

We lament the excessive delicacy of his ideas, which prevents us from grasping them.

II

We lament the excessive delicacy of his ideas, which *prevent* us from grasping them.

The fault here is the opposite of that just noticed: "which" stands for "delicacy," not for "ideas," and therefore requires a singular verb.

I

"Annals of the Parish" is among John Galt's best novels.

II

"Annals of the Parish" *are* among John Galt's best novels.

In speaking of a book by its title, a writer should as a rule treat that title, whatever its form, as a singular substantive: *e.g.* "'Gulliver's Travels' is the most popular of Swift's works."¹ "The Lives of the Poets," however, is sometimes used to signify, not the book by Dr. Johnson of

¹ See page 135.

which this is the title, but the separate "lives" of which the book is composed; it then properly takes a plural verb.¹

I

His humble birth, his scholarship, and the obscure poverty of his old age form an interesting chapter in the romance of letters.

II

His humble birth, his scholarship, and the obscure poverty of his old age *forms* an interesting chapter in the romance of letters.

"Birth," "scholarship," and "poverty" together make a plural subject, and therefore require a plural verb. A singular verb would, however, be correct in a sentence like "First his coat, and then his waistcoat, was thrown aside as he warmed to his work"; for the meaning is that first his coat was thrown aside and then his waistcoat: the two nouns do not form a plural subject, as they do in "His coat and his waistcoat were thrown aside."

I

The title of his work and the exact time when it was published were named.

II

The title of his work and the exact time when it was published *was* named.

Since the author of the sentence under II mentioned two things, the title and the time of publication, he should have used a plural verb. A singular verb would, however, be correct in a sentence like "The gayety and enthusiasm of the rout recalls the last loiterer in the supper-room"; for the absence of "the" before "enthusiasm" would show that the author regarded "gayety and enthusiasm" as the expression of one idea.

I

Each of these processes gives sure results.

II

Each of these processes *give* sure results.

Not one of these forty English words was in use before the battle of Hastings.

Not one of these forty English words *were* in use before the battle of Hastings.

¹ See Macaulay's practice in this matter, in his "Life of Samuel Johnson" (originally published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*).

Every one of us has had this feeling.

While either of the twins is hungry, nothing will give him sleep.

Both are fond of nature, but neither draws deep lessons from it.

Every one of us *have* had this feeling.

While either of the twins *are* hungry, nothing will give them sleep.

Both are fond of nature, but neither *draw* deep lessons from it.

A pronoun like "each," "not one," "every one," "either," "neither," makes us think of one person or thing at a time, and therefore requires a singular verb.

I

I do not believe that either the painter or his picture is famous.

Neither the bishop nor the recent writer in question has arrived at the truth.

Singular subjects connected by "or" or "nor" require a singular verb.

II

I do not believe that either the painter or his picture *are* famous.

Neither the bishop nor the recent writer in question *have* arrived at the truth.

I

No clew, no evidence, no trace, was found.

The meaning is, "No clew was found, no evidence was found, no trace was found": "clew," "evidence," and "trace" are thought of each by itself; the verb should, therefore, be singular.

II

No clew, no evidence, no trace, *were* found.

I

It is a question whether you or my mother is to make these payments.

II

It is a question whether you or my mother *are* to make these payments.

The difficulty with this sentence comes from the fact that "you" calls for "are" and "mother" for "is." In such a case, the verb usually agrees with the nearer noun or pronoun. Sometimes, however, euphony favors a repetition of the verb: *e.g.* "Either you are mistaken or I am," "Either he is mistaken or I am."

I

Half of the guns were loaded and ready for use.

The majority of Indian marriages are happy.

A multitude of heads, hats, fans, were waving in the air.

A large proportion of the pupils in the Bayard school are of foreign birth.

Whatever may have been Sophia's sensations, the rest of the family were easily consoled for Mr. Burchell's absence.

II

Half of the guns *was* loaded and ready for use.

The majority of Indian marriages *is* happy.

A multitude of heads, hats, fans, *was* waving in the air.

A large proportion of the pupils in the Bayard school *is* of foreign birth.

Whatever may have been Sophia's sensations, the rest of the family *was* easily consoled for Mr. Burchell's absence.

In these examples, since the persons or things designated by "half," "majority," "multitude," "proportion," "rest," must be thought of as individuals, the verb in each case should be plural. When a collective noun signifies a collection as a whole, it requires a singular verb; when it signifies the individual persons or things that make up a collection, it requires a plural verb.

I

The number of exercises is not great.

II

The number of exercises *are* not great.

In this example, "number" expresses not a plural but a singular idea, as it does in the sentence "The number of pupils never exceeds fifty-six": attention is called to the number as a whole, not to the individual persons or things that compose it. In the following sentence, on the contrary, "number" expresses a plural idea: "A number of swallows have built their nests in the church spire."

I

The Chamber of Commerce of Spokane requests the pleasure of your company at its first annual dinner.

II

The Chamber of Commerce of Spokane *request* the pleasure of your company at their first annual dinner.

In giving this invitation, the members of the Chamber of Commerce act, not as individuals, but as a body; the singular form of the verb is, therefore, preferable to the plural. If, however, the sentence had read "The Chamber of Commerce were not of one mind as to the propriety of giving a dinner," the plural verb would have been correct; for the lack of unanimity among the members would have shown that they considered the question as individuals.

I

The executive committee of the Civil Service Reform Association respectfully represents that this proposition appears to be a serious departure from the principles held, and it [*or the committee*] strongly urges senators to prevent the adoption of the resolution.

II

The executive committee of the Civil Service Reform Association respectfully represents that this proposition appears to be a serious departure from the principles held, and *they* strongly *urge* senators to prevent the adoption of the resolution.

"Committee" may properly be used with either a singular or a plural verb, according as the committee is spoken of as a body — as it seems to be in the present instance — or as the individual members that compose the body; but it cannot properly be treated as both singular and plural at once.

In the sentence "The public is [*or are*] invited," either a singular or a plural verb is allowable. One who thinks of the public as a mass will say, "The public is invited"; one who thinks of the public as composed of individuals will say, "The public are invited." "Public" is properly plural in the first of the following sentences, singular in the second: "The public are cautioned not to drive faster than a walk" (the public drive as individuals); "The public sometimes acts like a spoiled child" (the public acts as a body).

The question whether we should say "the United States is" or "the United States are" has been much discussed. Before the Civil War, the best authorities — including, it

is said, all our secretaries of state and all our presidents except Jackson — treated “the United States” as a plural noun. As a singular, it was condemned by Bryant in the famous “Index Expurgatorius,” which in his day settled questions of usage for the New York “Evening Post” and its intelligent readers. Since the Civil War, some reputable authorities — notably writers on American history — have insisted that, inasmuch as the sword has decided that all the territory under the stars and stripes constitutes one country, the name of that country should be in the singular number. Our recent presidents and secretaries of state seem to have adopted the singular form, and a movement is on foot to put it into the forthcoming edition of the “Revised Statutes of the United States.” In Great Britain, the “Times” and other conservative journals retain the plural; but many English as well as American periodicals prefer the singular. At present, the question between those who favor the old form and those who prefer the new must be regarded as unsettled.

I

Years of hot and bitter controversy were the result.

II

Years of hot and bitter controversy *was* the result.

In this example, the subject of the verb expresses a plural idea; for the author had in mind, not a period, but a succession of years coming one after another. On the other hand, in the sentence “Ten cents is the price,” the subject expresses a singular idea; for, whether we say “ten cents” or “a dime,” we think of the price as one sum, as we do when we say, “Five hundred dollars is a large sum.”

I

Two thirds of this amount is contributed by thirty-three members.

II

Two thirds of this amount *are* contributed by thirty-three members.

In this example, “is” is preferable to *are*; for we think of “two thirds,” not as two separate sums, but as one

sum. So, too, when we say "Nine tenths of life is made up of little things," we think of "nine tenths," not as nine separate divisions, but as one division. If I have an undivided melon, only one quarter of which is good, I may say of the rest of it, "Three quarters of this melon is bad"; but if I have a melon that is divided into quarters I should say, "Three quarters are bad," for I should think of three individual quarters.

I

This fund may be increased at any time by the addition of a sum not less than \$100. Since the beginning of the year, \$100 has been so added.

II

This fund may be increased at any time by the addition of a sum not less than \$100. Since the beginning of the year, \$100 *have* been so added.

The expression "a sum" implies that the writer is thinking of the addition as a whole. Had he omitted "a sum," he would have left room for the supposition that the \$100 "so added" consisted of several small contributions; in that case he would properly have said, "\$100 have been so added."

A frequent question is whether we should say "Six times two are twelve" or "Six times two is twelve," "Six and six are twelve" or "Six and six is twelve." Either form is correct. If we say "Six times two are twelve," we mean that six times two units are twelve units; if we say "Six times two is twelve," we mean that the number two multiplied by the number six is the number twelve. If we say "Six and six are twelve," we mean that six units and six units together make twelve units: if we say "Six and six is twelve," we mean that the number six added to the number six makes the number twelve, or that the sum of the numbers is the number twelve; or we may explain "is" by saying that the phrase "six and six" is regarded as the expression of one idea.

Use a singular verb when the subject is singular in idea, a plural verb when the subject is plural in idea.

EXERCISE LXXIX

Insert in each blank a proper form of the verb "be"; give the reason for your choice:—

1. This cheap rhetoric can be ascribed to one of two causes, neither of which — inherent in the mechanism of the daily press.
2. What we ask of Sir Walter Besant — pleasant and inspiring hours of wholesome entertainment.
3. Neither Hobbs nor his man Simpson — absolutely bad.
4. The criticism in my mind in regard to these characters — that they are decidedly overdrawn.
5. There —, however, a number of amusing incidents in the story as he told it.
6. "Horses" — a common noun.
7. The ship, with all her crew, — lost.
8. All England, as well as all Germany, — delighted that the emperor has escaped serious injury.
9. A special committee — appointed to investigate the matter.
10. Each of the heads of the Chimera — able to spit fire.
11. The jury — eating dinner.
12. Plutarch's "Lives" — an interesting book.
13. Among the most beautiful things that I saw at Kennebunkport — the tremendous rocks all along the coast.
14. — either of the boys going to the village?
15. Our happiness or our sorrow — largely due to our own acts.
16. All that remained of the hotel which we had seen the day before — a pile of ashes and a row of nails.
17. Every one of these books — disfigured.
18. Six dollars a week — all he earns.
19. Two thirds of his energy — wasted.
20. No tree, no rock, no pebble, — to be seen; nothing but sand.
21. In the Sandwich Islands, a small fraction of the population — Anglo-Saxon.
22. In each volume — five short stories.
23. Nothing but sour looks and hard words — to be gained by such conduct.
24. What — meant by the rights of women?
25. What — the rights of women?
26. Already a boy or two — in the field.
27. A host of flags — raised on high.

28. Neither you nor he —— invited.
29. Neither she nor you —— invited.
30. The greater part of his earnings —— used to procure food.
31. The party ate small shell-fish, but —— almost starved.
32. Mrs. Stoop is another of the women who —— playing golf at Magnolia.
33. Outside the gate —— drawn up a variety of vehicles, such as open carriages, dog-carts, gigs, and wagonettes.
34. Six months' interest —— due.
35. Half the mob —— drunk.

EXERCISE LXXX

Which word is correct, that in parenthesis or that which precedes? —

1. Neither Wotton nor Donne appear (appears) to have taken a degree at Oxford.
2. This woman with her child at her back have (has) crossed the Andes and two oceans.
3. In this state there has (have) been decisions to this effect.
4. The outside of things does (do) not always show what is inside.
5. If the Liberal party still values (value) the Nationalist alliance, it (they) will be forced to withdraw female suffrage.
6. Nothing but love and courage have (has) carried her through.
7. "The Egoist" is one of the strongest books that has (have) been written.
8. Already a train or two has (have) come in.
9. The annexation of the Philippine Islands, though they (it) bring (brings) a complex and perplexing problem, also ensure (ensures) good coaling stations.
10. Each day, each hour, bring (brings) contrary blessings.
11. The Senate has (have) adjourned.
12. No monstrous height, or length, or breadth appear (appears).
13. Thackeray's "English Humorists" treat (treats) less of the writings of the humorists than of their character and lives.
14. You are not the first one that has (have) been deceived in that way.
15. Generation after generation pass (passes) away.
16. A glimpse of gable roof and red chimneys add (adds) much to the beauty of the scene.

EXERCISE LXXXI

Compare the number of each verb with the number of its subject; if the verb does not agree with its subject, correct the error; make other changes when necessary: —

[These passages have all appeared in print.]

1. Besides the work of this school, there was shown in the same building the efforts of the pupils of the Germantown school and the kindergartens. The hall was cleared of blackboards and benches and filled with long tables decorated with streamers of delicate colors and bunting. Upon these were placed the dainty sewing of the many little girls who had worked so patiently during the past months in order to make something which their parents and friends might be proud to see on visitation day.

2. Fluency, with the graces of distinct delivery, were not disregarded.

3. In the following article Mr. Grenfell describes one of the most interesting documents that has come to light.

4. Even the dumb animals were not forgotten. Cruelty to these as well as to human beings were prohibited strictly.

5. There is a multitude of educated persons, many more, we are convinced, than there were half a century ago, who have no such familiarity with the books.

6. Nowhere could he find a trace of the crowd of human beings which ¹ usually throng the deck of an armed ship, or that was necessary to render the engines effective.

7. If a majority of the members of the House wishes to annex Hawaii, its will should prevail.

8. To tell the truth, neither Sir Roger nor his son were favorites with those stern custodians.

9. It is doubtful if the use of different kinds of exercises committed to memory really furnish the student any range of expression.

10. "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie" (written at Locklie, and therefore very early work) trace back to Gilbertfield's "Bonnie Heck."

11. Something of the old relations were presently restored.

12. It was a cold December evening when I attended this club, and there was a good many present.

¹ See page 125.

Misused Verbs. — Verbs, like nouns, are misused in various ways.

Verbs that are similar in appearance or in sound are sometimes confounded with one another : —

I

Teddie, glancing at the missive, hardly able to credit [*or believe*] the evidence of his senses, murmured thanks.

You are no more likely to be called insincere than to be credited with good intentions.

He did not use the coarse expression ascribed to him.

II

Teddie, glancing at the missive, hardly able to *accredit* the evidence of his senses, murmured thanks.

You are no more likely to be called insincere than to be *accredited* with good intentions.

He did not use the coarse expression *accredited* to him.

The use of *accredit* for “credit” is a common error. To “accredit” is to invest with credit or authority, or to send with letters credential: *e.g.* “The new consul will be accredited to the powers that be.” To “credit” is to believe; or to give a person credit for: *e.g.* “If we may credit his assertions, trouble is imminent,” “We will credit him with good intentions.” Sometimes, as in the last sentence under II, the fault lies in the use of *accredit* for “ascribe” or “attribute.”

I

The superstitious inhabitants of the village regarded him with suspicion because he could effect cures with herbs.

II

The superstitious inhabitants of the village regarded him with suspicion because he could *affect* cures with herbs.

To “affect” is to influence, move, or make an impression on, as “She was greatly affected by their kindness,” “The light affected our eyes very unpleasantly”; or to assume for the sake of display, as “They affected the character of loyal men.” To “effect” is to bring about, to accomplish: *e.g.* “The prisoner had almost effected his escape,” “They believed that cures were effected by the use of charms.”

I

He sank writhing to the ground.
He tried to rise.

Calvin's career had shown that
he rose above his time.

They urged him to wait till
October.

II

He sank writhing to the ground.
He tried to *arise*.

Calvin's career had shown that
he *arose* above his time.

They urged him to *await* till
October.

Arise for "rise" and *await* for "wait" are used by those who would be fine rather than simple. In ordinary prose, "arise" is seldom used except when it means (1) spring, originate, or result from, as "I know not what mischief may arise hereafter from the example of such an innovation" (Dryden); (2) "spring up, come into existence or notice, 'come up,' present itself," as "In the fourteenth century there arose in Italy the first great masters of painting and song" ¹(Bryce). In all other cases, "rise" is preferable: the sun, the moon, the wind, the tide, a mist, "rises"; persons "rise" from sleep, "rise" in rank, etc.; nations "rise" in hostility against others. In poetry, "arise" is sometimes, on account of its additional syllable, used in the literal, or nearly literal, senses that now belong in prose to "rise." "Await" is now in good use in two senses only, — wait for, as "I await your reply," and be in store for, be reserved for, as

I know not, O I know not
What joys await us there.

I

"The Prelude" was designed
[or intended] by Wordsworth to
give a history of himself.

II

"The Prelude" was *destined* by
Wordsworth to give a history of
himself.

"Destined" means, primarily, predetermined by fate or by a superior power, as "They were destined for each other"; but it is now often applied in a weaker sense, without any distinct idea of predetermination, to that which is unavoidable, as "He was destined never to reach

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under "Arise."

land." "Designed" means purposed, or intended: *e.g.* "She made a slight gesture, designed to express contempt."

I

I wonder you took so much trouble. What could you purpose [*or intend*] by it?

I do not purpose [*or mean*] to allow it.

II

I wonder you took so much trouble. What could you *propose* by it?

I do not *propose* to allow it.

"Purpose" in the sense of "intend," "have a purpose," — as "The statement which I purposed to make was simply this" (Lowell), — is preferable to *propose*; for "propose" means also offer for discussion or consideration, make a proposal,¹ as "Mr. Smith immediately proposed an amendment to the resolution," "He proposed to her in the evening."

Discriminate between verbs that are similar in appearance or in sound.

EXERCISE LXXXII²

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each verb: —

Accredit, credit; affect, effect; arise, rise; await, wait; destine, design; propose, purpose.

EXERCISE LXXXIII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the verb in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. He will be credited (accredited) by the government.
2. That will not affect (effect) the desired result.
3. Telegraphic communication was affected (effected).
4. For what trade is he destined (designed)?
5. He purposed (proposed) to give a half-holiday if the class would do a little extra work on Monday.

¹ For the distinction between "proposal" and "proposition," see page 74.

² See the "Note for Teachers," on page 75.

EXERCISE LXXXIV

Insert in each blank the proper verb in a proper form ; explain your choice : —

Accredit, credit

1. The dog has been — with modesty.
2. Mr. Lowell was — as minister plenipotentiary to England.
3. The bank has not — me with the interest on my deposit.

Affect, effect

1. The loud crash — my hearing for a while.
2. What he planned, he —.
3. He — his escape just as the servant announced a caller.

Arise, rise

1. Nash usually — early in the morning.
2. If any such difficulty —, you must meet it manfully.
3. All are requested to — and sing "America."

Await, wait

1. Honors that he little deserved — him in Washington.
2. I have — here for you ten minutes, and I am tired.
3. We — results with great anxiety.

Destine, design

1. The emperors — it to be a general council.
2. He was not — to escape so easily from his captors.
3. His parents — him for the ministry.

Propose, purpose

1. I — to write the history of England for the last two centuries.
2. I — that we go boating on the lake.
3. Bassanio — to pay the bond thrice over, but Shylock declined the offer, for he —, if possible, to take Antonio's life.

Other verbs sometimes confounded with one another because of a resemblance in appearance or in sound are : —

Accent, accentuate. — To "accent" is to put the accent, or vocal stress, on a particular syllable : *e.g.* "If the penult is long, accent it; otherwise, accent the antepenult." To

“accentuate” is to pronounce with an accent: *e.g.* “They [the French] never accentuate their words or their feelings: all is in the same key”¹ (Hare).

Accept, except. — To “accept” is to take something offered: *e.g.* “Accept my thanks.” To “except” is to make an exception of: *e.g.* “The master excepted a few from punishment.”

Advertise, advise. — “Advise” in the sense of “inform” — as “I have been advised of the meeting” — is preferable to “advertise,” which careful writers restrict to the meaning “give public notice of,” as “My book is advertised in the ‘Herald.’”

Alleviate, relieve. — To “alleviate” pain is to lighten it; to “relieve” pain is to remove it altogether or in a large measure.

Captivate, capture. — “Captivate” in the sense of “capture” is no longer in good use. To “capture” is to take prisoner; to “captivate” is to fascinate, to enthrall by being attractive. A woman may “capture” a butterfly, “captivate” a man.

Construe, construct. — To “construe” is to interpret, to show the meaning; to “construct” is to build. We may “construe” a sentence (as in translation), or “construct” one (as in composition).

Depreciate, deprecate. — To “depreciate” is, transitively, to lower the value of, to undervalue or disparage; intransitively, to fall in value: *e.g.* “The duty of criticism is not to depreciate a work of genius,” “These conditions caused property to depreciate.” To “deprecate” is to plead earnestly against, to express regret for or disapproval of: *e.g.* “To deprecate panic is an excellent counsel in itself”¹ (the “Times”), “Such a method of proceeding is greatly to be deprecated”¹ (Ouseley).

Discover,² disclose. — “Discover” in the sense of “disclose” is now old-fashioned. According to modern usage,

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

² For the distinction between “discover” and “invent,” see page 93.

to "discover" is to see, or to obtain knowledge of, for the first time, to find out : *e.g.* "A new gas has been discovered." To "disclose" is to uncover or to make known : *e.g.* "Her parted lips disclosed a double row of pretty teeth," "After some hesitation, he disclosed his plan."

Dominate, domineer over. — To "dominate" is to rule; to "domineer over" is to rule in an overbearing manner : *e.g.* "The Germans dominate the intellectual world"¹ (Huxley), "With a certain conscious despotism he rules, nay domineers, over us"¹ (Mrs. Oliphant).

Eliminate, elicit. — To "eliminate" is to cast out, to get rid of; to "elicit" is to draw out for use. We "eliminate" what we do not want, "elicit" what we do want : *e.g.* "By this process we eliminate *x*," "We found it exceedingly difficult to elicit any information from the natives."

Notice, note. — The difference between "notice" and "note" in their allied meanings seems to be that to "notice" is simply to observe (we notice anything that we do not overlook), to "note" is to observe with care, to notice particularly.

Prescribe, proscribe. — To "prescribe" is to lay down as a rule of action or to advise as a remedy; to "proscribe" is to outlaw or to condemn as dangerous. We "prescribe" a duty or a medicine, "proscribe" a man or a custom.

EXERCISE LXXXV

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each verb : —

Accent, accentuate; accept, except; advertise, advise; alleviate, relieve; captivate, capture; construe, construct; cultivate²; depreciate, deprecate; discover,³ disclose, invent³; dominate, domineer over; eliminate, elicit; emigrate,² immigrate²; esteem,⁴ estimate⁴; notice, note; prescribe, proscribe.

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

² See page 78.

³ See page 93.

⁴ See page 79.

EXERCISE LXXXVI

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the verb in parenthesis and with that which precedes:—

1. I accept (except) him.
2. Shall you advise (advertise) him?
3. The medicine alleviated (relieved) her suffering.
4. The Amazon captivated (captured) our hero.
5. The first sentence was not well construed (constructed).
6. The king depreciated (deprecated) Napoleon's effort to raise
a new army.
7. Who discovered (disclosed) the printer's error?
8. Turks dominate (domineer over) their wives.
9. Such treatment will elicit (eliminate) the cause of your trouble.
10. Do you think they noted (noticed) errors in grammar?
11. Her physician has prescribed (proscribed) the theatre and
other places of amusement.

EXERCISE LXXXVII

Insert in each blank the proper verb in a proper form¹; explain your choice:—

Accent, accentuate

1. His English is difficult to understand, for the reason that he
— his words like a foreigner.
2. Should the first or the second syllable of "exquisite" be —?
3. Probably these words were — then as they are now.

Accept, except

1. Mr. Smith — with pleasure Mrs. Brown's kind invitation.
2. She is the most attractive woman I know; I — none.
3. This offer he gladly —.

Advertise, advise

1. As my dog has been gone three days, I think I shall — him.
2. He — the constable of this at once.
3. He — for a partner.

¹ In some cases one verb or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Alleviate, relieve

1. This will — if it does not wholly — the pain in his head.
2. Hope — the sorrow of that home.
3. His charity went far to — the wants of the poor.

Captivate, capture

1. The vessels were destroyed, the seamen —.
2. Hers was just the sort of beauty to — a romantic youth.
3. Wisdom so — him that he gives himself up to her.

Construe, construct

1. His paragraphs are well —, and always end effectively.
2. We might — his words in a bad sense.
3. How is this passage in Virgil to be —?

Depreciate, deprecate

1. We cannot but — a course so detrimental to our honor.
2. Don't — your motives; leave that work to your enemies.
3. Financial panics are likely to follow a — currency.
4. His conduct is greatly to be —.

Discover, disclose

1. They contain some secrets which time will —.
2. The sounds continued, but we were unable to — their source.
3. I now thought fit to — to our crew our destination.

Dominate, domineer over

1. He — his sisters in the most arrogant way.
2. Three powers — the world: Fraud, Force, and Right.
3. The woman who enjoyed being — has gone out of fashion.

Eliminate, elicit

1. Her efforts at conversation — but a bashful "yes" or "no."
2. All personal animosity must be — from the discussion.
3. His bearing under trying circumstances — praise from all high-minded men.

Note, notice

1. Have you — the unusual color of the sky this afternoon?
2. — carefully what Huxley has to say on this subject.
3. Keep your ears open and — how cultivated men and women pronounce the word.

Prescribe, proscribe

1. This is the only study — for the sophomore year.
2. All such amusements were — among the Puritans.
3. The doctor — quinine in doses of four grains each.

Verbs that are similar, but not identical, in meaning, are sometimes confounded with one another: —

I

Threats only serve to provoke
[or irritate] people in such cases.

II

Threats only serve to *aggravate*
people in such cases.

Aggravate is often used for “provoke” or “irritate.” To “aggravate” is, properly, to add to the weight of (now in a figurative sense only), to make worse, to intensify: *e.g.* “Falsehood will only aggravate your offence,” “These disputes are aggravated by the fact that this wilderness is a gold country.” A similar remark applies to the noun “aggravation” and to the adjective “aggravating.” The latter is misused as often, at least, as the verb.

I

I can't influence him; he is
determined to have his own way.

II

I can't influence him; he is
*bound*¹ to have his own way.

Is bound in the sense of “is determined,” “is resolved,” or in the sense of “is certain,” “is sure,” seems to be increasingly popular in colloquial language; but it is not established in literature. In its legitimate sense, to be “bound” is to be under obligation or necessity of some sort: *e.g.* “Whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him” (Shakspeare).²

¹ In some grammars, “bound” is classed with adjectives.

² The Comedy of Errors, v. 1.

I

By evening Stirling had brought his prisoners to the Agency, where he found the lieutenant of Indian police, who had come over from Pine Ridge to take them home.

II

By evening Stirling had brought his prisoners to the Agency, where he found the lieutenant of Indian police, who had come over from Pine Ridge to *bring* them home.

He in whose charge the prisoners came to the Agency "brought" them; he with whom they went away from the Agency "took" them. "Bring" implies motion to or toward the place which is the speaker's, or the writer's, point of view; "take" implies motion from that place: *e.g.* "When you come again, bring your sister"; "If you are going home, won't you take this book with you?" Usually the speaker's, or the writer's, point of view is the place where he himself is; but if he says, "When I come to visit you I will bring the book," he adopts by courtesy the point of view of the person addressed.

I

Every morning she brought [*or fetched*] me a pitcher of salt water.

II

Every morning she *carried* me a pitcher of salt water.

The pitcher may have been "carried" to the ocean, for "carry," like "take," implies motion from the place that is the speaker's point of view; but the water was "brought" back. "Fetch," which is more common in England than in America, says more than "bring"; for "fetch" means go and bring.

I

Three weeks ago it was asserted that the food in Santiago was very poor.

Mrs. Makepeace declares that her husband beat her.

II

Three weeks ago it was *claimed* that the food in Santiago was very poor.

Mrs. Makepeace *claims* that her husband beat her.

Daniel Webster, it is said, underlined the word "claim" in a Connecticut law report published in 1814, and wrote

in the margin the following comment: "This word *claim* means everything in the law language of Connecticut. Here a man claims that he has lost a deed." "Claim," which, as Dr. Fitzedward Hall says, is "often loosely used (especially in the United States) for contend, maintain, assert,"¹ properly means demand as a right. It may be followed by a substantive, as "He claimed a third of the property," "He claimed attention"; by an infinitive phrase, as "He claimed to be an American"; or by an objective clause, as "He claims that he is entitled to the Tichborn property." "Assert"² means make a simple affirmation, or vindicate a disputed right (as "I will assert my independence"); "declare" means say publicly or emphatically; "maintain" means uphold by argument or assertion, as "We maintain that this doctrine is sound"; "contend" means the same as "maintain," except that it implies the existence of opposition, as "I contend that we have no right to make such a law."

I

Elocution is important, as almost any of the instructors in other departments will admit.

II

Elocution is important, as almost any of the instructors in other departments will *confess*.

Confess in the sense of "admit" or "acknowledge" is now rarely used by careful speakers or writers except in the parenthetical phrases "I confess," "I must confess," "it must be confessed." Strictly speaking, we can "confess" nothing but a fault of our own.

I

"I wouldn't debase myself so far," said Tita.

King Louis flung his cane out of the window: "because," said he, "I won't degrade myself by striking a gentleman."

II

"I wouldn't *demean* myself so far," said Tita.

King Louis flung his cane out of the window: "because," said he, "I won't *demean* myself by striking a gentleman."

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

² For the noun "assertion," see page 94.

The verb "demean," used reflexively in the sense of "behave one's self in a manner specified by a qualifying word or phrase," — as "He demeans himself like a young hero," — has been in good use for several centuries; in the sense of "debase, degrade, lower one's self," it is of far more recent origin. In the latter sense, it has been used by some good authors; but "one can hardly," in the words of Dr. Hall, "be taxed with excess of nicety, if one chooses to follow the lead of Lord Macaulay, and gives it the cold shoulder."¹

I

Now, I conjecture, Lady Ambrose, that you know more history than you are aware of.

It is an old saying that a story never loses in telling, and so we may suppose it must have been with this story.

II

Now, I *expect*, Lady Ambrose, that you know more history than you are aware of.

It is an old saying that a story never loses in telling, and so we may *expect* it must have been with this story.

"Expect" is a verb that looks to the future: we do not expect that a thing has happened, or is; we expect that it will happen, or will be. To "conjecture" is to form an opinion on slight evidence, to surmise: *e.g.* "What their number may be it is difficult to conjecture." To "suppose" is to assume to be true: *e.g.* "I suppose she knows what she is about."

I

After school he liked to wander through the woods. He liked to see the fish dart swiftly through the water.

II

After school he liked to wander through the woods. He *loved* to see the fish dart swiftly through the water.

"Love" means more than "like," and is properly applied to objects of affection, not, as we often hear it, to those of appetite: we may either "like" or "love" a person, we

¹ A full discussion of "demean" by Dr. Hall appeared in the "Nation," May 7, 1891.

“like” palatable food. With an infinitive, “like” is the better word.

I

While Harper was speaking, he carefully rolled up the map he had been studying and put it, together with sundry papers that were also open, in his pocket.

II

While Harper was speaking, he carefully rolled up the map he had been studying and *placed* it, together with sundry papers that were also open, in his pocket.

“Place” is more definite than “put.” To “place” a thing is to give it its proper position. Harper might have “placed” his map among his papers, but he “put” it in his pocket.

I

The university “back” declared bitterly that he might as well have stayed at home.

He went to the hotel where he was staying with his father.

II

The university “back” declared bitterly that he might as well have *stopped* at home.

He went to the hotel where he was *stopping* with his father.

The use of *stop* for “stay” is condemned on both sides of the Atlantic. We may “stop” at a hotel without “staying” in it; that is, we may stop in passing.

Discriminate between verbs that are similar in meaning.

EXERCISE LXXXVIII

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each verb: —

Aggravate; allude,¹ refer¹; be bound; bring, carry, fetch, take; claim, assert, declare, maintain, contend, state²; confess, admit; demean; expect, conjecture, suppose; instigate³; love, like; place, put; stop, stay.

EXERCISE LXXXIX

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the verb in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

¹ See page 86.

² See page 94.

³ See page 88.

1. I fear that I have but aggravated (provoked) his anger.
2. Are you bound (determined) to pay his debts?
3. I have brought (taken) your book.
4. Please bring (fetch) me a chair.
5. You had better carry (bring) an umbrella with you to-morrow.
6. What is it that you claim (assert), madam?
7. What do you expect (conjecture)?
8. Dorothy likes (loves) Helen.
9. Place (put) the book on the shelf.
10. Washington stayed (stopped) at this house on his way to Philadelphia.

EXERCISE XC

Insert in each blank the proper verb in a proper form ;¹ explain your choice : —

Aggravate, irritate, provoke

1. Your present assurance only serves to ——— your baseness.
2. He had not the heart to ——— her by telling her of her faults.
3. Do not ——— me too far.
4. His natural shyness was a good deal ——— by his great short-sightedness.

Be bound, be determined, be sure

1. War ——— to come.
2. He worked hard at his speech, for he ——— to speak it well.
3. We have promised, therefore we ——— to go.
4. I ——— to win, if I can.

Bring, carry, fetch, take

1. When you go south you will need to ——— some winter clothing.
2. I should like to ——— you the book when I come again.
3. Farmers ——— their potatoes to market.
4. Harry, please ——— a chair from the hall.
5. Go to the flock and ——— me two young lambs.

Claim, assert, declare, maintain, contend

1. He ——— that his father is insane.
2. The neighbors soon found that a large sum of money was missing, and they ——— that Silas was a thief.

¹ In some cases one verb or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

3. The "Herald" — that American workingmen are opposed to the strikes.
4. She — her innocence in the strongest terms.
5. He — everything as his own.
6. That such a report existed in Claudian's time cannot now be —.
7. Geologists — that before there were men on earth this immense gulf was a forest.
8. Paul — to be a Roman citizen.

Confess, admit

1. You will — that something is to be said on her side.
2. I have to — that I was wrong in suspecting him.
3. Every man must — that he has occasional fits of bad temper.

DemEAN, debase, lower

1. He thought that it would be quite beneath him to run after any girl who could so — herself as to run after Jonathan Stubbs.
2. The strange household — itself exactly as if things were going on as usual.
3. It was, of course, Mrs. Sedley's opinion that her son would — himself by a marriage with an artist's daughter.
4. No man in like circumstances could — himself more honorably.

Expect, conjecture, suppose

1. His motives we may only —.
2. I may fairly — that one who has received great kindness from me will protect me in time of danger.
3. I — that the forces will prove much stronger than we have been led to believe.
4. I — you are right.

Love, like

1. I — to cook; it is like performing experiments in chemistry.
2. He — to talk of the days before the war.
3. All children — their mothers.
4. Don't you — strawberry shortcake?

Place, put

1. — the books on the shelf according to their numbers.
2. — the drawing-books in the closet.
3. I am wondering how to — my guests at table.

Stop, stay

1. He will — for a hasty lunch somewhere on the route.
2. We — a week in Rome and then went to Milan.
3. If you are — in town for any length of time, we will call.

Other verbs sometimes confounded with one another because of a resemblance in meaning are: —

Begin, commence. — “*Begin* is preferred [to “commence”] in ordinary use; *commence* has more formal associations with law and procedure, combat, divine service, and ceremonial.”¹ In trivial matters, the use of “commence” for “begin” (as “*I commenced to laugh*”) is a vulgarity.

Condone, atone for. — “*Condone*” has frequently been used erroneously in the sense of “atone for,” “make amends for”; it properly means forgive, especially forgive by acting as if the offence had not been committed. We may “atone for” our own faults, we “condone” those of others.

Convene, convoke. — “*Convoke*” in the sense of “call together,” “cause to assemble,” is preferable to “convene,” since “convene” is oftener used intransitively in the sense of “come together,” “assemble”: *e.g.* “For five years afterwards the queen did not convoke parliament”² (Hallam), “Academies convene to settle the claims of the old schools”² (Emerson).

Inquire, investigate. — To “inquire” is to ask; to “investigate” is to examine. We may “inquire” about the cause of a fire, and then “investigate” the cause. A similar distinction exists between the nouns “inquiry” and “investigation.”

Involve, include. — “*Involve*” always implies a necessary connection between one thing and another: *e.g.* “The enterprise involves an outlay of money.” “*Include*” means comprise or contain: *e.g.* “My wardrobe does not include an evening dress.”

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under “Commence.”

² Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

Persuade, advise.¹—To “persuade” is to win over by acting on the feelings; to “advise” is to give counsel or information. We may “advise” a young man to study law without “persuading” him to do so.

Repulse, repel.—“Repulse” is a stronger term than “repel.” We “repulse” an enemy or an assailant, we “repel” unwelcome advances.

Ride, drive.—We “ride” on horses or in public conveyances; we “drive” in private carriages. “One *drives* in a vehicle of which the course is under one’s control, as one’s own or a friend’s private carriage, or a hired carriage or cab; one *rides* in a vehicle the course of which one does not control, as a public stage-coach, omnibus, or tram-car, or the cart of a friendly farmer who gives one a ‘lift’ on the way.”²

EXERCISE XCI

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each verb:—

Argue,³ plead³; begin, commence; condone, atone for; convene, convoke; inquire, investigate; invent,⁴ discover⁴; involve, include; persuade, advise; repulse, repel; ride, drive.

EXERCISE XCII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the expression in parenthesis and with that which precedes:—

1. Will you condone (atone for) the fault?
2. I will inquire about (investigate) the business methods of the building association.
3. True love involves (includes) friendship, but friendship is not love.
4. He advised (persuaded) me to have my life insured before I started for Liverpool.

¹ For “advise” in the sense of “inform,” see page 215.

² The Oxford English Dictionary. See also the Century Dictionary, and Hall’s “Modern English.”

³ See pages 91–92.

⁴ See page 93.

5. We are going riding (driving) this afternoon, if it stops raining before two o'clock.

6. He rides (drives) well.

EXERCISE XCIII

Insert in each blank the proper verb in a proper form;¹ explain your choice: —

Begin, commence

1. When I — Homer I spent three hours on a single lesson.

2. The proceedings were — in May.

3. You are only — to find out how lovely she is.

Condone, atone for

1. Fine language will never — want of manners.

2. We were ready to — some slight social offences in a man of such sterling worth.

3. By killing the fatted calf, the father of the prodigal — his son's shortcomings.

Convene, convoke

1. They — the assembly of the people.

2. The "Birlie Court" of the land-owner is said to have — under its shadow.

3. The archdeacon will — a meeting of the beneficed clergy.

Inquire, investigate

1. I will — (about) his name and rank.

2. Edison has been — (into) the nature of electricity.

3. A commission was appointed to — (into) the causes of the strike.

Involve, include

1. The sacrifice of life and treasure that is — is very great.

2. Honesty was — in the long list of his virtues.

3. In his noble act high principle was —.

Persuade, advise

1. It was impossible to — him to act against his conscience.

2. I — him to walk every day, but I could not — him to do it.

3. When in mid-ocean, Columbus was — to alter his course.

¹ In some cases one verb or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Repulse, repel

1. Such a nature as Margaret's always — children.
2. Children are not easily —.
3. The charge of Pickett's troops at Gettysburg was —.

Ride, drive

1. As there is a bridle-path up the mountain, those who have horses can —.
2. We can — down town in the electric car.
3. If you wish to — this afternoon, I will have the dog-cart brought round.

Some verbs are misused so often and in so many ways that their correct meanings are obscured or lost sight of altogether : —

I

Such action must alienate many classes of voters.

Trochu was prepared to reject every proposal I should make.

II

Such action must *antagonize* many classes of voters.

Trochu was prepared to *antagonize* every proposal I should make.

Antagonize in the general sense of "oppose" belongs to the congressional dialect. To "antagonize" is, properly, to be an antagonist to, to act in opposition to: one person antagonizes another, or one force another. "In England," says the Oxford English Dictionary, "antagonizing forces must be of the same kind, but in the political phraseology of the United States a person may antagonize (*i.e.* oppose) a measure."

I

A circular row of seats was occupied by smokers.

II

A circular row of seats was *availed of* by smokers.

Avail of as used in the sentence under II is not good English. It is correctly used with a reflexive pronoun: *e.g.* "Smokers availed themselves of a circular row of seats." "Avail" (without "of") is also used intransitively with the meaning "be of service," "help in the accomplishment of a purpose": *e.g.* "'Words avail very little with me, young man,' said my father"¹ (Scott).

¹ Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

II

The government building is the one which is giving more concern to the commission than any other.

The government building is the one which is *concerning* the commission more than any other.

"Concern" in the sense of "engage the attention of" or "cause solicitude to" is obsolete in the active voice, but is still in good use in the passive: *e.g.* "The commission is concerned that the government building shall be of the best architecture." In the sense of "be of importance to," "be the business of," it is common in the active voice: *e.g.* "This does not concern you." In the sense of "take interest in" or "take trouble about," it is used reflexively: *e.g.* "He never concerned himself about his sister's affairs," "Do not concern yourself about it."

I

There are schools that fit boys for Harvard; there are those that fit them for Yale.

II

There are schools that *fit* for Harvard; there are those that *fit* for Yale.

The intransitive use of *fit*, as shown in the sentence under II, is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, peculiar to the United States; but it is not sanctioned by good usage here. Correctly used, "fit," like "prepare," requires an object.

I

We are beginning special sales in several of our departments.

They had formed a strange, unequal friendship during the three days that Osgood had been left alone.

The reader cannot guess how the plot will shape itself.

He found the next stile, like a second step in sin, very easy to pass.

II

We are *inaugurating* special sales in several of our departments.

They had *inaugurated* a strange, unequal friendship during the three days that Osgood had been left alone.

The reader cannot guess how the plot will *materialize*.

He found the next stile, like a second step in sin, very easy to *negotiate*.

“Inaugurate,” “materialize,” and “negotiate” are made to serve so many purposes that their exact meanings are almost lost sight of. To “inaugurate” is, primarily, to induct into office with formal ceremonies, and hence to set going, usually with formality, something of public importance: *e.g.* “The president will be inaugurated next month,” “The World’s Fair is to be inaugurated to-morrow.” To “materialize” is, properly, to make, or to become, perceptible to the senses: *e.g.* “The ideas of the sculptor materialize in marble.” It is possible to “negotiate” peace, a treaty, or a promissory note, but not to *negotiate* a “stile” or a “step in sin.”

I

Tickets will be taken at the door.

If the cover comes off the book, the conductor will take up the coupons and return them to the office.

II

Tickets will be *lifted* at the door.

If the cover comes off the book, the conductor will *lift* the coupons and return them to the office.

Lift in the sense of “take” or “take up” comes perhaps from the Scottish use of the word as applied to the practice of stealing cattle from the English. It cannot properly be applied to tickets or coupons.

I

Detectives, after months of searching, found the daughter [or found out that the daughter was] in Jane County.

II

Detectives, after months of searching, *located* the daughter in Jane County.

Locate does not mean find. It is properly used in the sense of “fix in a place,” or “settle”: *e.g.* “We shall locate ourselves in Albany.” In the sense of “fix the place of,”—as to “locate” a land claim or a line of railway,—it is peculiar to the United States.¹

¹ See the Century Dictionary.

I

The rumor of what had taken place was spread abroad.

More than two seconds elapse between the infliction of the wound and the muscular response of the part wounded.

Does what occurs in the executive session of the Senate ever leak out [*or transpire*] ?

II

The rumor of what had *transpired* was spread abroad.

More than two seconds *transpire* between the infliction of the wound and the muscular response of the part wounded.

Does what *transpires* in the executive session of the Senate ever leak out ?

The sentences under II show some of the ways in which *transpire* is often misused. The word, which comes from the Latin *trans* (through, across) and *spirare* (to breathe), and is akin to the French *transpirer* (to perspire), originally meant give out through the pores. It next came to mean escape from secrecy to notice, leak out; in this sense, which Johnson reprobated as "an innovation from France," it has established itself in the language. "Transpire" is correctly used in the following sentence from a London journal: "So far, nothing has been allowed to transpire as to the progress of the negotiations, but the belief in an ultimate settlement is general."

Use verbs in their specific meanings.

EXERCISE XCIV

Tell why each verb within quotation-marks is correctly used : —

1. Concave and convex lenses "antagonize," and, if of equal refractive power, neutralize, each other. — LE CONTE.¹
2. Then shall they seek t' "avail" themselves of names, Places and titles. — MILTON.¹
3. Nor aught the warrior's thundering mace "avail'd."
Supine he fell. — POPE.
4. Till assisted by grace, there is nothing about which the heart of man "concerns" itself so little, as how he shall obtain it. — COWPER.

¹ Quoted in the Century Dictionary.

5. *Edward*. No quarrel, but a slight contention.

York. About what?

Richard. About that which "concerns" your grace and us.

—SHAKSPERE.¹

6. Manly and delicate accomplishments, "fitting" him to shine both in active and elegant life.—IRVING.

7. Politicians . . . shouted with . . . glee when Cromwell was "inaugurated" in Westminster Hall.—MACAULAY.

8. By this means [by means of letters] we "materialize" our ideas, and make them as lasting as the ink and paper, their vehicles.—THE GUARDIAN.²

9. He that "negotiates" between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech.—COWPER.

10. She . . . was "located" for the rest of her life as mistress of Loustead Abbey.—FARRAR.²

11. There is no den in the wide world to hide a rogue. . . . Some damning circumstance always "transpires."—EMERSON.²

EXERCISE XCV

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each verb:—

Antagonize, avail of, concern, fit, inaugurate, lift, locate, materialize, negotiate, transpire.

EXERCISE XCVI

Tell why each italicized verb is misused; substitute for each a better expression:—

1. High schools and seminaries *fit* for college.

2. During its entire existence, this country has been the champion of the freedom of commerce; and to-day an opportunity exists, which should certainly be *availed of*, to assert that championship.

3. The promised reward has not yet *materialized*.

4. This greatly surprised and *concerned* Mr. Smithson.

5. A fence of this sort is difficult for a man in a hurry to *negotiate*.

¹ 3 Henry VI, i. 2.

² Quoted in the Century Dictionary.

6. This conception of tragedy *antagonizes* our very belief in a Supreme Being.

7. The stolen rings have not yet been *located*.

8. And so the thing had progressed, and the picnic been *inaugurated*.

9. Silas takes an interest in everything that *transpires*.

10. The cut is *lifted* from the pages of the "Scientific American."

Would-be Verbs. — One way in which a language grows is by the formation of verbs from nouns or (rarely) from other parts of speech; but words that are not in good use as verbs are not properly verbs.

I

The tenderness in her voice was not in harmony with the hardness of her face.

The two men were never neighborly, much to the Quaker's regret.

Among the verbs designated in the dictionaries as "rare" are *discord* and *neighbor*. The use of such words as verbs is a mark of ignorance or of affectation, or of both.

I

She went to work as a clerk in a store.

He was asked to supply capital for a moribund society paper.

I shall lend you one hundred dollars only.

Please telegraph as early as possible what equipments, ammunition, etc., you have.

Clerk, *finance*, *loan*, and *wire* as verbs have some authority in colloquial, but none in literary, use.

II

The tenderness in her voice *discorded* with the hardness of her face.

The two men never *neighbored*, much to the Quaker's regret.

II

She began *clerking* in a store.

He was asked to *finance*¹ a moribund society paper.

I shall *loan* you only one hundred dollars.

Please *wire*² as early as possible what equipments, ammunition, etc., you have.

¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the earliest recorded instance of this use of "finance" is in the "Times," which, in 1866, called it a "new verb."

² See page 102.

I

A. B. Blank's brother Fred was killed while acting as brake-man on a train to Portland.

It would be cheaper to electro-type the illustrations.

He was accidentally killed by an electric wire.

People were not enthusiastic over Peter.

The injured limb was soon bathed and bandaged.

This collar can be laundered better than any other.

The senator is coming to Boston to deliver an address.

The House took a recess till eight o'clock.

Mrs. Carlyle looked up, wondering what had tempted the child to revive that old song.

He summoned me to the office.

John Smith spent Sunday with his brother.

"But," he said, "won't the deacon suspect that it came from you?"

Would-be verbs like those in the sentences under II are without authority even in colloquial use.

I

He will push his code through by a strict party vote.

VOTED, That the association disapprove of the action of Princeton toward the referee, and extend a vote of thanks to Mr. Appleton for acting as referee of the game in a proper and dignified manner.

II

A. B. Blank's brother Fred was killed while *breaking* on a train to Portland.

It would be cheaper to *electro* the illustrations.

He was *electrocuted* by mistake.

People did not *enthuse* over Peter.

The injured limb was soon *lotioned* and bandaged.

This collar *laundries* better than any other.

The senator is coming to Boston to *orate*.

The House *recessed* till eight o'clock.

Mrs. Carlyle looked up, wondering what had tempted the child to *resurrect* that old song.

He *summonsed* me to the office.

John Smith *Sundayed* with his brother.

"But," he said, "won't the deacon *suspicion* that it came from you?"

II

He will *railroad* his code through by a strict party vote.

VOTED, That the association disapprove of Princeton's action toward the referee, and extend a vote of thanks to Mr. Appleton for *refereeing* the game in a proper and dignified manner.

In that year Jack was stroke
on the Freshman crew.

In that year Jack *stroked* the
Freshman crew.

Mr. Jackson was asked to act
as umpire.

Mr. Jackson was asked to
umpire the game.

To railroad belongs to legislative slang; *to referee*, *to stroke* (in boating), and *to umpire* (in games) belong to the dialect of athletics.

Avoid verbs that have not been admitted to good use.

[EXERCISE XCVII]

In place of each italicized word, substitute an expression that is in good use as a verb: —

1. I admit that I began to *enthuse* a little.
2. The desire to *resurrect* our merchant service prevails.
3. He is now *clerking* in New York.
4. That chord seems to *discord* with the one you struck last.
5. We *neighbored* once out in Chicago.
6. Will you *loan* me your white tie for to-night?
7. I am glad that murderers are going to be *electrocuted* in future.
8. Do you like *breaking* on this road as well as on the Boston and Albany road?
9. Stewart was asked to *stroke* the crew to-day and to *umpire* the game to-morrow.
10. Jack is *summonsed* before the faculty.
11. Don't forget to *wire* me as soon as you reach Buffalo.
12. Their mothers earned their livings by *laundrying*.
13. He is said to *orate* eloquently.
14. I *suspicioned* that they had sent for you.

Redundant Verbs. — A verb required by neither the sense nor the construction encumbers a sentence.

I

If it has [*or is*] to be done [*or*
If it must be done], I will do it.

I can't buy it; I haven't a
dollar.

II

If it has *got* to be done, I will
do it.

I can't buy it; I haven't *got* a
dollar.

Got is redundant when it expresses an idea already expressed in "have"; it is not redundant when it means secured, as in "I haven't yet got the book."

I

If Gladstone had not lived,
England would not be what it is.

If it had not been for Dunstan,
Godfrey would not have been
wild.

II

If Gladstone had not *have* lived,
England would not be what it is.

If it had not *have* been for
Dunstan, Godfrey would not have
been wild.

For the use of *have* in the sentences under II there is no excuse; "had lived" and "had been" are the complete forms of the past-perfect tenses of "live" and "be."

I

I should like you to meet my
brother.

I do not wish you to kill your-
self.

II

I should like *to have* you meet
my brother.

I do not wish *to have* you kill
yourself.

The sentences under II illustrate a form of redundancy which is common in America even among the educated, but which is rarely heard in England.

I

I cannot but feel [*or* cannot help
feeling] that something is wrong.

II

I cannot *help* but feel that
something is wrong.

In the sentence under II, *help* is redundant: the meaning is fully expressed by either of the forms under I.

Avoid as a hindrance any verb that is not a help to the sense or to the construction.

EXERCISE XCVIII

Strike out any redundant verbs; make other changes if necessary:—

1. What objection have you got to seeing him here?
2. I should like to have her see the best things in the city.
3. He could not help but speak his thought.
4. If you had have tried gold beads, you would never have had all this trouble.
5. I have got a sore throat, but I don't know where I got it.

Omitted Verbs. — Verbs necessary to the sense, or to the construction, or to both, are sometimes omitted.

I

Thackeray gives Swift a much better character than Johnson does.

II

Thackeray gives Swift a much better character than Johnson.

The sentence under II is ambiguous, for “than Johnson” may mean either “than he gives to Johnson” or “than Johnson does.”

I

I forgot to do something I ought to do [*or* to have done].

II

I forgot to do something I ought to.

Sentences ending with the sign of the infinitive, though common in colloquial language, should, as a rule, be avoided in formal writing, partly because the construction is clumsy and gives an unfinished appearance to the sentence, and partly because it is, by the strict rules of grammar, incorrect.

I

We should try to decide whether we should have used his material as he has used it [*or* has done].

II

We should try to decide whether we should have used his material as he has.

When they left the room, they seemed much more deeply impressed than they had seemed [*or* been] at first.

When they left the room, they seemed much more deeply impressed than they had at first.

In each of these examples, the choice between the two forms is a choice between the colloquial and the formal: in conversation the form given under II would be proper; in serious writing that given under I would be more appropriate. In some cases it is better to omit a verb, or a part of a verb, than to be too formal; such cases must be learned by observation.

I

You had better not work any longer to-day.

II

You better not work any longer to-day.

"Had better," as has already been said,¹ is an established idiom; but "you better" without "had," as in the sentence under II, is not English.

I

The Confederates had better have lost the battle than this commander of genius.

II

The Confederates had better lost the battle than this commander of genius.

In this example, the verb coupled with "had better" is an infinitive, even though "to" is not expressed. Speaking of the future we say "had better lose," speaking of the past we say "had better have lost."

I

At that moment he was no neglected contributor, but was, to his own consciousness, putting a powerful shoulder to the wheel.

II

At that moment he was no neglected contributor, but, to his own consciousness, putting a powerful shoulder to the wheel.

The omission of "was" before "putting" is especially objectionable; for this "was" is an auxiliary, whereas the first "was" is an independent verb.

I

The question is one which no one has answered or ever will answer.

II

The question is one which no one has answered or ever will.

The government has not entered, and will not enter, into negotiations [*or has not entered into negotiations, and will not do so*].

The government has not and will not enter into negotiations.

The omission of a part of a verb makes each of the sentences under II incorrect; for the form omitted is not the same as that expressed.

¹ See pages 15-16.

I

Our pessimists forget how much more complex are the thought and feeling, and how much deeper and fuller is the life, of to-day.

II

Our pessimists forget how much more complex are the thought and feeling and how much deeper and fuller the life of to-day.

The omission of the verb from the second dependent clause of the sentence under II may be excused, for more freedom is permissible with "be" than with other verbs. Were the verb omitted of the same number as the verb in the first dependent clause, the omission would be unobjectionable in any but the most formal writing.

In formal writing, do not omit a verb or a part of a verb that is needed to make the meaning clear or the sentence grammatical.

EXERCISE XCIX

Supply any verbs or parts of verbs needed to make the meaning clear or the grammatical construction correct: —

1. If you have not already written, you ought to.
2. Portia begins by telling Shylock that he better receive the money instead of the forfeit.
3. Albert Lee, the son of Sir Henry, was as devoted to his king as his father.
4. They would not have done so much as I have.
5. Captain Mahan was a native of New York, and appointed to the Naval Academy in 1856.
6. It is as pretty a dress as she ever has or will wear.
7. Buck said his father and brothers ought to waited for their relatives.¹

¹ See page 74.

CHAPTER VII

ARTICLES¹

“A” or “An”? — No one says “*an* book,” and few are so ignorant as to say “*a* elephant.” Even those who never heard of the rule that “a” should be used before a consonant sound and “an” before a vowel sound, are guided correctly by the ear; for euphony lies at the foundation of the rule.

II

So this is your idea of a unicorn!

This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses a unit.

In order to get an appointment in a university, he must go to Germany to study.

I spoke of such a one.

So this is your idea of *an* unicorn!

This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses *an* unit.

In order to get an appointment in *an* university, he must go to Germany to study.

I spoke of such *an* one.

“U” in “unicorn,” “unit,” and “university” sounds exactly like “you” in “youth,” and should therefore take “a” before it, as “youth” does. “One” sounds exactly like the first syllable of “wonder,” and should therefore take “a” before it, as “wonder” does. An author who is guided by the eye only may write “an university” and “such an one,” for to the eye “u” and “o” are vowels; an author who is guided by the ear as well as by the eye will write “a university” and “such a one.” It cannot be

¹In many grammars, articles are placed among adjectives; but they are adjectives of a peculiar kind. For the purposes of this book, it is convenient to treat them by themselves.

denied, however, that "an unit," "such an one," and the like are sometimes written, inadvertently or perversely, by good authors.

I	II
A house in town.	<i>An</i> house in town.
A hotel by the sea.	<i>An</i> hotel by the sea.
An honorable man.	<i>A</i> honorable man.
An honest deed.	<i>A</i> honest deed.

We properly say "a house," "a hotel," but "an honorable," "an honest," in compliance with the rule that "a" is correct when the "h" before a vowel sound is aspirated, "an" when it is not. Early writers were not bound by this rule,¹ and many modern authors prefer "an" to "a" before "habitual," "heretical," "heroic," "historical," "hypnotic," and other words in which the "h" sound is weakened because the accent falls on the second syllable; in such cases, however, the best present usage seems to incline toward "a."²

Use "a" before a consonant sound, "an" before a vowel sound.

EXERCISE C

Insert in each blank the proper form of the indefinite article. In which cases, if any, is either form allowable?—

1. He had — habitual lurch in his walk.
2. We have — host of picture-books with colored plates.
3. This is — unique position.
4. — hostler stood near, holding by the bridle — immense black horse.
5. There was — unanimous vote in the affirmative.

¹ *An* was often retained before *w* and *y* in [the] 15th century, as *an wood*, *an woman*, *an yere*, *such an one*, and was regular before *h* down to the 17th century, as *an house*, *an happy*, *an hundred*, *an head* (1665). Its history thus shows a gradual suppression of the *n* before consonants of all kinds, and in all positions. — The Oxford English Dictionary.

² On this point the Oxford English Dictionary says: "In *unaccented* syllables, many, perhaps most, writers still retain *an* before sounded *h*, some even before *eu*, *u*, as *an historian*, *an euphonic vowel*, *an united appeal*, though this is all but obsolete in speech, and in writing *a* becomes increasingly common in this position."

6. Such — one-sided statement I never before heard.
7. His first speech will be — eulogy on the late J. T. Sims.
8. The king of Württemberg is the only knight of the garter who is also — hotel-keeper.
9. He is — heroic figure.
10. There goes — honest man.

EXERCISE CI

In which sentence (*a* or *b*) of each of the following pairs is the italicized article correct at the present time?—

- 1*a*. I am known to be *a* humorous patrician. — SHAKSPERE.¹
- 1*b*. He that would learn to pass a just sentence on persons and things, must take heed of a fanciful temper of mind, and *an* humorous conduct in his affairs. — WATTS.
- 2*a*. I can tell why a snail has *a* house. — SHAKSPERE.²
- 2*b*. But Solomon built him *an* house. — ACTS vii. 47.
- 3*a*. Were they then to be awed by the supereminent authority and awful dignity of *a* handful of country clowns? — BURKE.
- 3*b*. I have not a cake, but *an* handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. — 1 KINGS xvii. 12.
- 4*a*. One of the officers who had *an* horse kindly took her behind him. — GOLDSMITH.
- 4*b*. *A* horse! *a* horse! my kingdom for *a* horse! — SHAKSPERE.³

“**A**” (or “**An**”) or “**The**”? — The distinction between the indefinite article and the definite is familiar. In the lines

A rose

By any other name would smell as sweet,⁴

“**a**” designates, not a specific rose or class of roses, but any flower called a rose. In the sentence “The rose in the vase is very fragrant,” “**the**” designates one rose in particular.

To the general rule as to the use of “**a**” and “**the**,” sentences like the following contain apparent, but not real, exceptions: “The elephant is an intelligent ani-

¹ Coriolanus, ii. 1.

² King Lear, i. 5.

³ Richard III, v. 4.

⁴ Shakspeare: Romeo and Juliet, ii. 2.

mal," "The pen is mightier than the sword" (Lytton), "I like to go out on the water." In each of these sentences, "the" is used in a generic, or representative, sense: "the elephant" represents elephants as a class, "the pen" and "the sword" represent pens and swords in general, "the water" represents water as distinguished from land.

Use "a" or "an" to indicate any person or thing; use "the" to indicate a particular person or thing, or a person or thing as representative of a class.

EXERCISE CII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the article in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. Can the (a) fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries?
2. The (A) sweet psalmist of Israel said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me."
3. The (A) house is on fire.
4. The (An) elephant stood on a cask, and the (a) clown sat on the elephant's back.
5. He told us about the (an) accident.
6. He is the (an) editor of the "Gazette."
7. He sat in the council of the doges when Venice was the (a) powerful republic.

EXERCISE CIII

Insert in each blank the proper article, the definite or the indefinite: —

1. — lion is — king of beasts.
2. I do not remember the details of — story, but it had to do with — man who had been sent by — New York daily paper to — place which was apparently — centre of — worst earthquake our country has ever known.
3. — reader finds it hard to believe that the characters in — book are but creatures of — imagination.
4. Scarcity of provisions and want of transports will doubtless prevent their offering — vigorous defence at a distance from — main position.

“A” (or “An”) or “One”? — The article “a” and the numeral “one” were originally the same word; but in the language as it now exists they have separate functions.

I

I have often returned from a party at half-past ten, and have then made a call on a girl which lasted until half-past eleven.

II

I have often returned from *one* party at half-past ten, and have then made a call on a girl which lasted until half-past eleven.

The emphasis is not upon *one* party as distinguished from another, but upon “party” as distinguished from “call”; the indefinite “a” is, therefore, the proper word.

Discriminate between “a” or “an” and “one.”

Article or “This”? — The adjective “this” is frequently used where an article would be better.

I

I remember the story. A man who always carried an umbrella, hearing of a woman who never carried one, immediately became curious to see her.

II

I remember the story. There was *this* man who always carried an umbrella, who heard of *this* woman who never carried one, and immediately became curious to see her.

A person who begins a story with a remark about “*this* man,” “*this* woman,” forgets that, however well known to him the characters may be, they cannot become “this man” and “this woman” to the reader until they have been introduced in some way.

I

I shall try to estimate the worth of the principle which sustains my proposition.

II

I shall try to estimate the worth of *this* principle which sustains my proposition.

In this example, “this” might have been correct if the principle referred to had been mentioned in a preceding sentence. Since it was not there mentioned, “the” is the proper word; for “the principle” leads to what follows in the restrictive relative clause at the end of the sentence.

Use "a" or "an," not "this," to introduce a person or an object; use "the," not "this," to point forward to a restrictive relative clause.

EXERCISE CIV

Which word is preferable, that in parenthesis or that which precedes?—

1. At the top of a hill was this (an) old dilapidated house, which was said to be haunted.
2. I will say a word on the (this) point next to be discussed.
3. It is one (a) day to be remembered.

Redundant Articles.—An article is sometimes inserted where it is not needed.

I

Mrs. Bennet is not the kind of woman to put up with these things without a struggle.

I don't think I should care for that sort of opportunity.

II

Mrs. Bennet is not the kind of *a* woman to put up with these things without a struggle.

I don't think I should care for that sort of *an* opportunity.

The use of *a* or *an* before a class name, especially after the words "sort" and "kind," is a common error. "Kind of *a*" and "sort of *a*" were once, but are no longer, in good use.

I

He is not worthy of the name of man [*or* name "man"].

II

He is not worthy of the name of *a* man.

The writer of the sentence under II had in mind, not the name of an individual man, but the name given to the class man as distinguished from other classes of beings.

I

She was a belle at parties.

I protest against the usual attitude of people toward puns.

Last night the committee on athletics met in my room. Soon after they adjourned, visitors began to come.

II

She was a belle *at the* parties.

I protest against the usual attitude of people toward *the* puns.

Last night the committee on athletics met in my room. Soon after they adjourned, *the* visitors began to come.

To put *the* before “parties” or “puns” or “visitors” is to give apparent definiteness to what is really indefinite unless the meaning is already known to the reader. If it is not known to him, he naturally asks, “What parties?” “What puns?” “What visitors?” but he finds no answer in the sentence. The presence of “the” would be justified, however, if the meaning of each phrase were made definite by the addition of one or more words, — as “the parties in Papanti’s Hall,” “the puns in Hood’s poems,” “the visitors I had invited.”

I

At present [*or* At the present time], these things are true.

Dunstan was sadly in need of money.

II

At *the* present, these things are true.

Dunstan was sadly in *the* need of money.

“At present” and “in need” are established in the language; but “at *the* present” and “in *the* need” are not good English.

I

Few children like to puzzle over a thing that is not plain after a second reading, at most.

II

Few children like to puzzle over a thing that is not plain after a second reading, at *the* most.

Several centuries ago, “at *the* most” was the proper form; but in modern English “at most” is preferred.

I

Most, if not all of them, are mere typographical errors.

II

The most, if not all of them, are mere typographical errors.

When “most” is followed by a phrase expressing number, quantity, or bulk, it does not, according to the best usage, require an article.

I

Digging [*or* The digging of] the foundations and constructing [*or* the constructing of] the cellars is weary labor.

II

The digging the foundations and *the* constructing the cellars is weary labor.

If “digging” and “constructing” are preceded by “the,” they should be followed by “of”; for the presence of the articles implies that the forms in “-ing” are to be treated as nouns.¹ In this case, the better plan is to omit the articles and to give the forms in “-ing” direct objects, — that is, to treat them as verbs.

Avoid as a hindrance any article that is not a help to the meaning.

EXERCISE CV

Strike out any redundant articles : —

1. Joceline Joliffe was a sort of a man-of-all-work round the Lodge.
2. It would scarcely surprise us to learn that the animals have in common with us the essential element of religion.
3. They had a strong influence on me, and mostly for the good.
4. The contemplating literature from the point of view of an outsider was natural to me.
5. It is these characters that give the life to his Scotch novels.
6. Good a walker as I am, I was beginning to feel tired.
7. The most of the brigands who carried off Miss Stone have dispersed.

EXERCISE CVI

If an article is needed where there is a blank, insert the right one; if none is needed, insert none: —

1. The old man soon formed — plans for the king's escape.
2. Ariel had — power to control — sea.
3. Evangeline travelled far in — search of Gabriel.
4. — life in Madras in — time of Clive was different from what it is now.
5. You'd find your Louvre a very different sort of — place from what it used to be, my dear lady.
6. — most of us were too restless to seek repose.
7. I began to suffer from — want of food.
8. — violet is my favorite flower; — robin, my favorite bird.
9. I fear you are in — need of sleep.
10. Thackeray was greater as — writer than as — artist.

¹ See page 52.

11. He is entitled to the name of — scholar.
12. In — warm weather you do not need so many wraps as in — cold weather.
13. Good writing comes in part from — reading of good books.
14. Youth is the time for — forming the character.

Omitted Articles. — More mischief is caused by the omission of a necessary article than by the insertion of an unnecessary one.

I

He deems it no sin to steal a pen or a pencil.

A boy and a girl young enough to be punished could not possibly fall in love.

II

He deems it no sin to steal a pen or pencil.

A boy and girl young enough to be punished could not possibly fall in love.

In these examples, by repeating the article in each case we show at once that two things and two persons are meant.

I

The portraits include a full and a profile view of Washington.

A Yale and a Williams man had been conversing about the game.

II

The portraits include a full and profile view of Washington.

A Yale and Williams man had been conversing about the game.

The omission of “a” before “profile” leaves room for the supposition that Washington’s full face and his profile form a single portrait, or at least that they are in one frame, like the portraits of Charles I by Vandyke. “A Yale and Williams man” means, literally, one man who is, or has been, connected with both institutions.

All the sentences under II on this page are objectionable because they are susceptible of absurd interpretations rather than because they are likely to be misunderstood. Sometimes, however, the presence or the absence of an article changes the meaning: thus, “a red and a white flag” means two flags, one red, the other white; “a red and white flag” means one flag of two colors.

I

They were frowned upon by
the court and the clergy.

II

They were frowned upon by
the court and clergy.

“The court and clergy” means, literally, either one body composed of two sections or two bodies acting as one. If, as is probable, the writer had in mind two bodies acting independently, he should have said “the court and the clergy.”

I

Neither the army nor the navy
[or Neither army nor navy] was
ready when the war broke out.

II

Neither the army nor navy was
ready when the war broke out.

The “Nation” tries to crush
both the president and the over-
seers [or both president and over-
seers].

The “Nation” tries to sit on
both the president and overseers.

If “the” is used before “army” and “president,” it should be used before “navy” and “overseers”; if it is omitted before “navy” and “overseers,” it should be omitted before “army” and “president”: correlatives — like “neither . . . nor,” “both . . . and” — require that the words which they connect shall be treated alike.

I

The text-books are the Franklin
or the Munroe Readers.

II

The text-books are the Franklin
or Munroe Readers.

As “Franklin” is the name of one set of readers, and “Munroe” the name of another, “the” is required before “Munroe.”

I

The poems of his youth are
marked by the faults and the
beauties of his maturer work.

II

The poems of his youth are
marked by the faults and beauties
of his maturer work.

In this example, “the” is necessary before “beauties” to show that “the poems of his youth” resemble “his maturer work” in two distinct ways. “The faults and weaknesses” would be correct, because faults and weaknesses are closely akin. So, too, “the” is not necessary

before "children" in "The women and children were in a safe place before the bombardment began," for the phrase "women and children" means one class, non-combatants; or before "Fellows" in "the President and Fellows of Harvard College," for "the President and Fellows" means the corporation; or before "stripes" in "the stars and stripes" — that is, the American flag.

Never omit an article that is needed to make the meaning clear.

EXERCISE CVII

Explain the difference in meaning in each case between the expressions connected by "and": —

"A black and white cat" and "a black and a white cat"; "the wise and good" and "the wise and the good"; "a terebinth or ilex tree" and "a terebinth or an ilex tree"; "the bread and butter" and "the bread and the butter"; "an arch or dome" and "an arch or a dome"; "the butcher, fish-dealer, and grocer" and "the butcher, the fish-dealer, and the grocer"; "a cook and housemaid" and "a cook and a housemaid"; "the incapable, crippled, and aged" and "the incapable, the crippled, and the aged"; "the twelfth and last chapter" and "the twelfth and the last chapter"; "a cotton and wool dress" and "a cotton and a wool dress"; "the corresponding and recording secretary" and "the corresponding and the recording secretary."

EXERCISE CVIII

Wherever an article is needed to make the meaning clear, supply one; where none is needed, supply none: —

1. A wide, mountainous peninsula lay between the ocean and bay.
2. He had learned to know man, within a white or colored skin.
3. Greene shows in succession the theory and practice of crime.
4. The boys and girls were less patient than the men and women.
5. It was a struggle between the temporal and spiritual powers.
6. The firedrake is a beast or bird about the size of an elephant.
7. The president and dean are *ex-officio* members of the Board.
8. The petition will be presented to the mayor and aldermen.
9. The choice lay between the Catholic and Protestant schools.
10. It was a mistake to send wine to the engineer and fireman.

CHAPTER VIII

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

It is often a question whether the proper word in a given case should be an adjective or an adverb; some words serve both as adjectives and as adverbs; many adverbs are formed from adjectives. For these reasons, it is convenient to deal with adjectives and adverbs together.

Vulgarisms. — Some blunders in the use of adjectives and adverbs are, or should be, confined to the illiterate.

I

I can't find it anywhere.

You can go everywhere.

II

I can't find it *anywheres*.

You can go *everywheres*.

For *anywheres*, *everywheres*, and also for *nowheres*, *somewheres*, there is no excuse.

I

Pope does not translate accurately.

An old glove goes on easily.

Swift treated Stella as meanly as a man could treat a woman.

II

Pope does not translate *accurate*.

An old glove goes on *easy*.

Swift treated Stella as *mean* as a man could treat a woman.

In each of these examples, the word in question should be an adverb; for it modifies a verb.

I

The ancients were not so very badly off.

We learned that really clear days were rare.

Miss Blank did remarkably well at the examination last week.

Byron could be terribly scathing.

II

The ancients were not so very *bad* off.

We learned that *real* clear days were rare.

Miss Blank did *remarkable* well at the examination last week.

Byron could be *terrible* scathing.

In each of these examples, the word in question should be an adverb; for it modifies either another adverb or an adjective.

I

A tired look about the eyes showed that she had not slept well.

Don't you feel well to-night?

II

A tired look about the eyes showed that she had not slept *good*.

Don't you feel *good* to-night?

Good is never properly used as an adverb. The adverb corresponding to the adjective "good" is "well": *e.g.* "He slept well after a good dinner." "Well," when it means "in good health," is an adjective, as in the second sentence under I.

I

She is rather pretty.

He seemed to hesitate.

II

She is *kind of* pretty.

He *kind of* hesitated.

This vulgar use of *kind of* as an adverbial phrase has possibly grown out of the established idiom that appears in expressions like "a good kind of man"—that is, "a man of a good kind."

I

I should describe Jessica as light-complexioned [*or of a light complexion*].

II

I should describe Jessica as being *light-complected*.

The use of *complected* after "light," "pale," "dark," or "fair" is common in some parts of the United States; but it is not in good use anywhere. For "light-complexioned" there is some authority, but "of a light complexion" is better.

I

Nobody was likely to stir.

II

Nobody was *like* to stir.

Like in the sense of "likely" appears in the King James translation of the Bible; but it is no longer in good use in prose.

I

Colonel Picquart will probably be transferred to their custody.

II

Colonel Picquart will *likely* be transferred to their custody.

In old times, *likely* was sometimes used for “probably” in a sentence like that under II; but now the word in this sense is not good English. “Probably” is an adverb; “likely” almost always an adjective, as “That is a likely story.” In familiar conversation, however, “very likely” is in good use as an adverb, especially when the verb which it modifies is omitted; thus, in answer to the remark “You will end by paying more than it is worth,” we may say “Very likely,” instead of “I shall very probably do so.”

I

Seldom had the little port seen
a costlier funeral.

This is the sultriest day we
have had for more than a month.

II

Seldom had the little port seen
a *more costlier* funeral.

This is the *most sultriest* day we
have had for more than a month.

Double comparatives and superlatives abound in books written during the Elizabethan age (a familiar instance is Shakspeare’s phrase “the most unkindest cut of all”¹); but they are now used by the illiterate only.

I

What is true of one is true of
almost all.

His simplicity may be seen in
almost everything he has written.

II

What is true of one is true of
most all.

His simplicity may be seen in
most everything he has written.

Most in the sense of “almost,” which is found here and there in early English, is now a vulgarism.

I

A promise of good pay, with
not much [*or with little*] to do,
won their hearts.

II

A promise of good pay, with
nothing much to do, won their
hearts.

“Nothing” as an adverb is in good use when it means “not at all,” as in a few phrases like “nothing daunted,” “nothing dismayed.” *Nothing much* is a vulgarism.

¹ Julius Cæsar, iii. 2.

I

He was not nearly so prolific a writer as Wordsworth.

II

He was *nowhere near* so prolific a writer as Wordsworth.

The writer of the sentence under II did not mean *nowhere* (in no place), but simply "not." *Near* in the sense of "nearly" was formerly in good use; but it is now avoided by careful writers of prose unless they are referring to periods of time, as Macaulay is in the phrase "a literary life of near thirty years."

I

The more plentiful paper money became, the more men ran into debt.

The house was quite large enough.

II

The more *plenty* paper money became, the more men ran into debt.

The house was *plenty* large enough.

As a noun, "plenty" is in good use,¹—*e.g.* "We have plenty of flour"; as an adjective, it was once, but is no longer, good English; as an adverb, it has always been vulgar.

I

There isn't a better situation in the world for a house.

II

There isn't a *sightlier* place in the world for a house.

"Sightly" was formerly, and is still sometimes, used in the sense of "pleasing to the eye";² but in the sense of "conspicuously placed," or "affording a good view," as used in the sentence under II, it is not, and has never been, good English.

I

Mrs. Blank has been very sick, but is now somewhat better.

The outside of the earth, after it had cooled somewhat, was hard and solid.

He knows something of Arabic.

II

Mrs. Blank has been very sick, but is now *some* better.

The outside of the earth, after it had cooled *some*, was hard and solid.

He knows *some* of Arabic.

¹ See page 93.

² See Shakspeare's "King John," ii. 1, line 143.

Some in the sense of "somewhat" or "something" strays into the conversation of careless speakers, and even into formal compositions; but it has no support in good use. "Somewhat" and "something" are often used interchangeably; but there is an advantage in restricting "somewhat" to adverbial use, as in Longfellow's line,

Somewhat back from the village street,

and "something" to substantive use, as in Milton's,

Something yet of doubt remains.

I

I am not going so far.

I cannot give you twenty, for I have not so many.

It wouldn't cost so much as that.

II

I am not going *that* far.

I cannot give you twenty, for I have not *that* many.

It wouldn't cost *that* much.

In the sentences under II, *that* is used adverbially to express degree; but "that" is not properly an adverb.

I

I'm extravagant in this kind of thing [*or in things of this kind*].

I never have anything to do with that kind of person.

II

I'm extravagant in *these* kind of things.

I never have anything to do with *those* kind of people.

Careless speakers and writers use the plurals of "this" and "that" (the only adjectives in English that have distinct forms for the plural) with the collective nouns "kind," "class," "sort." Shakspeare, it is true, treated "kind" as a plural noun, as

These kind of knaves I know;¹

but modern writers treat "kind," "class," and "sort" as singular. "Manner" is still used as a plural in such phrases as "all manner of things."

I

She will be better at Sharon than anywhere else [*or in any other place*].

II

She will be better at Sharon than *any place else*.

¹ King Lear, ii. 2.

If you don't find it there, look
somewhere else [*or in some other*
place].

If you don't find it there, look
some place else.

Any place else for "anywhere else" or "in any other place," and *some place else* for "somewhere else" or "in some other place," are frequently heard in some parts of the United States; but they are not in good use.

I

There is, first, the old distinction of the laws of science.

They treated him so ill that he would not stay.

The joke amused me much.

We reason thus.

II

There is, *firstly*, the old distinction of the laws of science.

They treated him so *ilily* that he would not stay.

The joke amused me *muchly*.

We reason *thusly*.

In each of the sentences under II, the fault consists in the addition of the adverbial termination "-ly" to a word that is an adverb without it. *Firstly* was used by some early authors, and is still occasionally seen; but it is not in Johnson's Dictionary, and it is condemned by De Quincey as follows: "First (for I detest your ridiculous and most pedantic neologism of *firstly*) — first, the shilling . . . secondly, two skeins of suitable thread." In standard English, "first" serves as both adjective and adverb; "second," "third," etc., are adjectives only. *Illy*, which was once in fair repute, now belongs to the dialect of the uneducated. *Muchly* is popular with American "humorists," from Artemus Ward on. *Thusly* figures in the language of the ignorant as well as in that of "humorists."

I

He was a stranger to us.

He was unknown to us.

II

He was a stranger *unbeknown*
to us.

Unbeknown has never been in good use.

Avoid vulgarisms in the use of adjectives and adverbs.

EXERCISE CIX

In place of any vulgarisms, substitute expressions that are in reputable use : —

1. They differed in most every respect.
2. She's dark-complected like her father.
3. He never bored himself with those sort of things.
4. He is a remarkable good shot.
5. They were in a terrible dangerous position.
6. He writes plainer than he once did.
7. Strawberries must be very plenty this season.
8. With the thermometer at 100°, Ludon is nowhere near so hot as England would be.
9. She gives pretty near the same account that he does of it.
10. The two things to bear in mind are : firstly, that the conference has broken up ; and secondly, that it meets again on Monday.
11. The genius of Jokai is close akin to the genius of Dickens.
12. Both sides were illy prepared for the encounter.
13. They'll want you to break it to the girls, like as not.
14. They kind of harped on the subject.
15. She knew her lesson perfect to-day.
16. Alvin is pretty bad off.
17. I think that the treatment Shylock receives is plenty good enough for him.
18. There is nothing much to be said about her.
19. When the people saw how kind he treated his child, they did everything possible for him.
20. I was willing to follow him through the new civilization that he described thusly.
21. I regretted muchly that I could not be present.
22. He is disposed to take things easy.
23. We agreed we'd go somewheres that night.
24. Lady Jane all this time, unbeknown to him, was holding his jacket.
25. "Do you think she is pretty?"
"Kind of."
26. It is a very sightly place for a house.
27. Both things helped me some, I am sure.
28. Elizabeth's manner was more statelier than Edith's.
29. I can't do it as good as you can.

30. The "Anne E. Stephens" will likely be used as a transport.

31. I wish I had that much money.

32. You had better put it some place else.

Adjective or Adverb? — The question whether to use an adjective or an adverb is sometimes perplexing.

I

She asked if he would have his
eggs cooked soft.

II

She asked if he would have his
eggs cooked *softly*.

"Cooked *softly*" means cooked in a soft, or quiet, manner; "cooked soft" means so cooked as to be soft: the adverb describes the manner of cooking, the adjective the condition of the eggs when cooked.

I

An old shoe feels easy.
The waves looked green and
angry.

II

An old shoe feels *easily*.
The waves looked green and
angrily.

When his money was at an
end, these unprincipled friends
began to look coldly upon him.

When his money was at an
end, these unprincipled friends
began to look *cold* upon him.

If the qualifying word after a verb like "feel," "grow," "look," "smell," "sound," "taste," applies to the verb itself, it should be an adverb; if it applies to the subject of the verb, as it manifestly does when some form of "be" or "seem" may be substituted for the verb, it should be an adjective. Sometimes we may use either adjective or adverb, with almost no difference in meaning: *e.g.* "We were sitting quiet [*or* quietly] round the fire."

I

Don't feel so badly about it.

II

Don't feel so *bad* about it.

In this example, "bad" might seem to be the proper word after "feel"; but since "bad," when applied to persons, usually has a moral signification, it would, as used in the sentence under II, mean something quite different from what was intended.

I

Lady Russell had freshly arranged all her evening engagements.

This discussion was fully as much in the air as the other.

These earnest appeals were scarcely resistible.

II

Lady Russell had *fresh* arranged all her evening engagements.

This discussion was *full* as much in the air as the other.

These earnest appeals were *scarce* resistible.

Fresh and *full* were formerly in good use as adverbs; but modern usage prefers "freshly" and "fully," except in compounds like "fresh-baked," "full-chested," etc. *Scarce* is found in some modern authors of repute, but the use of it in prose is not to be recommended.

Some adverbs — called "flat adverbs" — have the same forms as the corresponding adjectives. Examples of such adverbs appear in the following expressions: "dive deep," "run fast," "come first," "die hard," "sing high," "dance ill," "sit up late," "speak loud," "sing low," "walk straight."

I

Nothing had happened in Def-
field to make him feel toward it
otherwise than as the most im-
personal of artists.

II

Nothing had happened in Def-
field to make him feel toward it
other than as the most impersonal
of artists.

In this example, the adverb "otherwise," not the adjective *other*, is correct; for the meaning is "in any other way than."

I

These results could not have
been different.

He had been delivering his
opinion on things parochial and
other than parochial [*or* and not
parochial].

II

These results could not have
been *otherwise*.

He had been delivering his
opinion on things parochial and
otherwise.

"Otherwise," though properly an adverb, has been occasionally used by good authors (especially in such a sentence as that last given under II) as if it were an adjective. When, however, in a case of this kind, some

adjective can, without loss of ease, be used instead of "otherwise," it is preferable. When an adjective would be clumsy, another turn should be given to the expression.

I

Relatively to her population, England has nearly four times as many railway passengers as the United States.

II

England has, *relative* to her population, nearly four times as many railway passengers as the United States.

In this example, "relatively," not *relative*, is proper; for the word in question qualifies a verb. In a similar case, "previously" would be preferable to *previous*.

I

Sydney Carton, not only in the last act of his life but long before, was a hero.

II

Sydney Carton, not *alone* in the last act of his life but long before, was a hero.

The meaning is, not that Sydney Carton had some one with him in the last act of his life, but that, both in the last act of his life and long before, he was a hero. "In the Bible and earlier English *alone* is often used for the adverb *only*, but it is now becoming restricted to its own sense of solitary, unaccompanied by other persons or things:"¹ *e.g.* "She was left alone with him." "Only" is both adjective and adverb.

Use adjectives to qualify nouns or pronouns; adverbs to qualify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs.

EXERCISE CX

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the word in parenthesis and with that which precedes:—

1. We found the way easy (easily).
2. The prunes are boiling soft (softly).
3. It looks good (well).
4. I always feel warm (warmly) at such a time.
5. I felt so bad (badly) that I cried.

¹ The Century Dictionary.

EXERCISE CXI

Which word is preferable, that in parenthesis or that which precedes? —

1. David told full (fully) half-a-dozen times the story of that night.
2. I can't write otherwise (other) than slowly.
3. Relatively (relative) to its size, an ant is ten times stronger than a man.
4. One can scarce (scarcely) help smiling at the blindness of this would-be critic.
5. The wind blows very cold (coldly) to-day.
6. He sat silent (silently) till she breathed more calmly.
7. The doctor's family discharged its duties, social and other (otherwise), to general satisfaction.
8. It tastes different (differently) in different parts of the mouth.
9. Monday dawned coldly (cold) and clearly (clear).
10. She dresses suitable (suitably) to her station.
11. Velvet feels smooth (smoothly).
12. How sweet (sweetly) these roses smell!
13. They felt very bad (badly) at being beaten.
14. She looked cold (coldly) on his offer of marriage.
15. Ethel looked sweet (sweetly) in a white gown.
16. Luther stood firmly (firm) in spite of abuse.

EXERCISE CXII

Insert in each blank the proper word, "only" or "alone": —

1. Not — from England, but from the wilds of Australia, come messages of gratitude.
2. She — of all the family had courage to go — into that darkened room.
3. These books are sold in sets —.
4. Man shall not live by bread —.
5. This fault — is enough to make her disagreeable.

Comparative or Superlative? — The distinction between the comparative and the superlative degree of an adjective is sometimes disregarded.

I

The elder lady was probably
the more interesting of the two.

II

The elder lady was probably
the *most* interesting of the two.

“Most” refers to one of three or more, “more” to one of two.

I

That poem I like more than
any other single piece of verse.

II

That poem I like *most* of any
other single piece of verse.

To say “*most* of any other” is like saying “*most* of one”—an absurdity. Since the sentence is so framed as to imply a comparison between only two things at a time,—the poem in question and each of the other “single pieces” in turn,—“more” is the proper word. Had the sentence read “That poem I like *most* of all single pieces of verse,” “*most*” would have been correct: “*most* of all” means the same as “more than any other.”

I

Of my three friends, Grace,
Helen, and Bertha, the first is
an artist, the last a musician.

II

Of my three friends, Grace,
Helen, and Bertha, the *former* is
an artist, the *latter* a musician.

“The former” and “the latter” are properly used when the comparison is between two persons or things, “the first” and “the last” when it is between three or more.

Use the comparative degree of two persons or things, the superlative of more than two.

EXERCISE CXIII

Which expression is preferable, that in parenthesis or that which precedes?—

1. This did not make Nancy the most (more) favored of the two.
2. Which can run faster (fastest), your horse or mine?
3. Of the two Latin poets, Virgil and Horace, the first (former) is the better (best) known.
4. Which is farther (farthest) east, Boston, New York, or Bangor?
5. He is no doubt the better (best) in the little group of friends.
6. This coat pleases me best of (better than) any other.

Absolute Adjectives and Adverbs. — Adjectives and adverbs that are absolute in meaning and therefore do not admit a modification of degree are sometimes, but improperly, treated as if they did.

I

The sky gradually became cloudless.

The most lovable people are not always immaculate.

The vote was so nearly unanimous that I threw up my hat.

II

The sky became *more and more* cloudless.

The most lovable people are not the *most* immaculate.

The vote was *so unanimous* that I threw up my hat.

We have only to think of the exact meaning of the italicized adjectives in the sentences under II to see that comparison is out of the question.

Among other adjectives and adverbs that are absolute in meaning, and are therefore not susceptible of qualification by inflection or by adverbs of degree like "less," "least," "more," "most," "so," "too," and "very," are the following: —

absolutely	incessant	omnipotent
axiomatic	incredible	omnipresent
conclusively	incurable	omniscient
continually	indelible	spotless
decisive	indispensable	stationary
entirely	insatiate	sufficient
essential	inseparable	typical
exclusively	intangible	unanswerable
extreme	interminable	unbearable
faultless	intolerable	unbounded
flawless	invariable	unerring
fundamental	irreparable	unique
immutable	irreproachable	universally
impossible	irrevocable	unparalleled
impregnable	mainly	unprecedented

In poetry or in impassioned prose, some words that are absolute in meaning and are therefore in principle not susceptible of qualification may take adverbs of

degree: *e.g.* "graceless," "hopeless," "merciless," "priceless." Even in simple prose some exceptions to the general rule are allowable: *e.g.* "correct," "safe," "satisfactory," "sound," "sure," "true," "truly"; and, more rarely, "certain," "certainly," "complete," and "perfect" (as in the Constitution of the United States — "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union," etc.). Inexperienced writers should, however, beware of breaking the general rule.

Do not qualify an absolute adjective or adverb.

EXERCISE CXIV

Which of the following adjectives and adverbs do not vary in degree? —

Brave, certainly, cloudless, cold, correct, dead, exact, French, golden, happy, identical, immaculate, inaudible, individual, inevitable, instantly, irresistible, long, ready, right, round, satisfactory, sharp, square, total, true, typical, unanimous, uniform.

EXERCISE CXV

Correct errors in the use of adjectives or adverbs; give your reason for each correction: —

1. These qualities make him so unique a figure that he is sure to live.
2. Mr. Freeman's story was very interesting, but too incredible.
3. Are there many persons who find the question so unanswerable as you do?
4. She has two of the most fundamental qualities of first-rate writing, and also two of the most pleasing.
5. This is a very essential preliminary to the consideration of the American historical novel.
6. Consumption is the most incurable of diseases, and the most deceptive.
7. This tragedy is the most indelible of all the memories I hold.
8. Her conduct is rather lively, but very irreproachable.
9. "Middlemarch" is very typical of George Eliot.

Misused Adjectives and Adverbs. — Adjectives and adverbs, like nouns and verbs, are misused in various ways.

Adjectives or adverbs that are similar in appearance or in sound are sometimes confounded with one another: —

I

I want a decisive answer.
He was a decided man.

II

I want a *decided* answer.
He was a *decisive* man.

“Decided” means resolute, determined, and is applicable to both persons and things; “decisive” means final, conclusive, and is applicable to things only. A “decided” opinion is a strong opinion, which perhaps decides nothing; a “decisive” opinion settles the question at issue.

I

The decision of the finance committee was definitive.

II

The decision of the finance committee was *definite*.

“Definite” is the opposite of “indefinite,” “definitive” of “provisional.” An answer may be “definite” (that is, clear, well-defined) without being “definitive” (that is, final).

I

Her face is distinctively plain.

II

Her face is *distinctly* plain.

“Distinctly” means clearly, plainly: *e.g.* “I remember him distinctly.” “Distinctively” means peculiarly, in a way that makes a distinction: *e.g.* “He spoke in a distinctively able manner.”

I

I never saw any one else so economical of her smiles.

II

I never saw any one so *economic* of her smiles.

John Freeman, a historical painter, was a rival of Fuller.

John Freeman, a *historic* painter, was a rival of Fuller.

The lover of history longs to explore old historic lands.

The lover of history longs to explore old *historical* lands.

When an adjective has two forms, one in “-ic” and one in “-ical,” that in “-ic” often implies a closer connection with the nature of the subject in question than that in “-ical,” which may mean nothing but “practically connected with” or “dealing with.”¹ An “economic subject” is a subject that belongs to the science of economy; an “economical woman” is a woman who puts economy into practice. “Historic lands,” “historic scenes,” “a historic house,” are lands, scenes, a house, that have played important parts in history; “a historical painter” or “a historical writer” is one who deals with matters of history, “historical plays” or “historical novels” are those which are based on history. Sometimes, however, the distinction between the two forms almost disappears.

Sometimes an adjective has one meaning for the form in “-ic” and another for that in “-ical.” Thus, “political” means having to do with politics, whereas “politic” (which in its old sense of “political” survives only in the phrase “the body politic”) means sagacious in advancing a policy or a system of management — hence, in a good sense prudent, in a bad sense artful. One may be “politic” in the management of a “political” campaign.

I

They retreated farther and farther.

Even when his thoughts wandered farthest, he was mechanically correct.

II

They retreated *further* and *further*.

Even when his thoughts wandered *furthest*, he was mechanically correct.

“In standard English the form *farther* is usually preferred where the word is intended to be the comparative of *far*, while *further* is used where the notion of *far* is altogether absent; there is a large intermediate class of instances in which the choice between the two forms is arbitrary.”²

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under “-ic” and “-ical.”

² The Oxford English Dictionary.

I

Kate was thin, but perfectly healthy.

II

Kate was thin, but perfectly *healthful*.

"Healthy" is now the proper word to signify in good health. "Healthful" means health-giving, as "healthful exercise," "a healthful climate." "Wholesome" is applied to that which tends to promote either physical or mental health, as "a wholesome dish," "wholesome advice," "wholesome truths," "wholesome society."

I

I do not think that the commission is likely to exterminate the pest.

The secretary is likely to be censured [*or liable to censure*].

Dr. Blank usually gets to the office at nine.

II

I do not think that the commission is *liable* to exterminate the pest.

The secretary is *apt*¹ to be censured.

Dr. Blank is *apt* to get to the office at nine.

"Liable" implies an unpleasant possibility; "likely" a probability, whether pleasant or unpleasant. We are "liable" to make mistakes, we may be "liable" to legal processes; but the gypsy-moth commission is "likely," or not "likely," "to exterminate the pest." In the sentence "Large sections of the peerage were at that time liable to be tried for their lives," "liable" means that the persons referred to might possibly be tried; "likely" would mean that they probably would be tried.

"Apt," which is often incorrectly used for "likely" or "usually," properly implies a predisposition, a habitual tendency: *e.g.* "I am, I fear, apt to look at the dark side." "Apt" has other meanings that are more clearly defined: we speak of an "apt scholar," meaning one quick to take an idea; of an "apt quotation," an "apt word," an "apt reply," meaning one that fits the occasion.

¹ "Apt" is, of course, not similar to "liable" and "likely" in appearance or in sound; it is put with them for convenience.

I

He chose a simple white dress,
partly made.

II

He chose a simple white dress,
partially made.

Careful writers restrict “partially” to the sense of “with partiality,” “partly” to the sense of “not wholly.” Useful as this distinction is, it is often disregarded.

I

The practical common sense of the American people will soon see that any other course is ruinous.

II

The *practicable* common sense of the American people will soon see that any other course is ruinous.

“Practicable” means capable of being carried out, feasible, as “a practicable method,” “a practicable plan.” “Practical” is the opposite of “theoretical” or “speculative”: a “practical electrician” is one who puts his knowledge of electricity into practice; “practical agriculture” is actual farming.

Discriminate between adjectives or adverbs that are similar in appearance or in sound.

EXERCISE CXVI

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each adjective and adverb:—

Decided, decisive; definite, definitive; distinctly, distinctively; comic, comical; economic, economical; historic, historical; politic, political; further, farther; healthful, healthy, wholesome; liable, likely, apt; partially, partly; practicable, practical.

EXERCISE CXVII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the word in parenthesis and with that which precedes:—

1. It is a decided (decisive) victory.
2. His reply was definite (definitive).

3. St. Paul announces no distinctive (distinct) dogma.
4. Is it a politic (political) measure?
5. This is a healthy (healthful) plant.
6. The car is likely (liable) to be crowded.
7. She is apt (likely) to oversleep.

EXERCISE CXVIII

Insert in each blank the proper word;¹ explain your choice: —

Decided, decisive

1. He felt a — aversion to company.
2. It is in Creasy's "Fifteen — Battles of the World."
3. Smith spoke out boldly in a — tone.

Definite, definitive

1. I have considered the question, and my answer is —.
2. These sensations are worse to bear than any — pains or aches.
3. Before the end of my senior year, I had —ly chosen the teaching of English as my life-work.

Distinctly, distinctively

1. The rose is — a June flower.
2. I tried twice, but could not speak —.
3. He said many things, but nothing — new.

Economic, economical

1. These principles will help us in the investigation of most — problems.
2. Miss Blank is giving practical instruction in — cooking.
3. The — habits acquired in early life were so strong that he spent less than a third of his income.

Historic, historical

1. We devoted three days in Boston to places of — interest.
2. — painting should record the best of man's acts and ways.
3. A Norman castle stood on that — spot.

¹ In some cases one word or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Politic, political

1. Such were the epithets which came to Lady Arabella's mind; but she was — enough to suppress them.
2. The causes of — happiness in all governments are the same.
3. The whole body — owes its preservation to the honest endeavors of upright men.

Further, farther

1. It was not safe for the ships to proceed — in the darkness.
2. Let me add one — truth.
3. They contented themselves with the things of their own country without looking —.
4. I came to ask if you have any — wishes.

Healthful, healthy, wholesome

1. If a — body contributes to the health of the mind, so also a — mind keeps the body well.
2. Gardening is a — recreation for a man of study or of business.
3. — food in a — climate makes a — man.
4. A — place. A — constitution. — diet.

Liabie, likely, apt

1. Sparks from the locomotive would have been — to strike the north side of the building.
2. Professor Hardy is — to be prevented by illness from resuming his college duties.
3. Any kind of taxation is — to be looked on as a grievance.
4. He is — to be cross at breakfast.
5. We are — to act on our impulses.
6. Dave is — to come in at any minute.
7. One is — to speak quickly, — to hear good news, — to be hurt.

Partially, partly

1. The difficulty might be — obviated.
2. Justice was not to be expected from a court so — constituted.
3. All men are — buried in the grave of custom.

Practicable, practical

1. His repeated failures do not prove that the project is not —.
2. For all — purposes, this machine is as good as the other.
3. This plan of campaign is not —.

Other adjectives or adverbs sometimes confounded with one another because of a resemblance in appearance or in sound are : —

Barbaric, barbarous. — “Barbaric” in its specific meaning designates objects of art or of dress that are characteristic of barbarians, ornate but in doubtful taste: *e.g.* “Above all loomed the tower of Ivan and the domes of St. Basil, gaudy and barbaric as ever” (A. D. White). “Barbarous,” a more general term, means rude, uncivilized, or cruelly harsh, and is applied to men, their manners, customs, etc.: *e.g.* “It is a barbarous practice to dock horses’ tails.” This distinction between the two words is useful; but some good authors write “barbaric” when they mean “barbarous.”

Climatic, climactic. — “Climatic” means pertaining to climate: *e.g.* “New England is subject to sudden climatic changes.” “Climactic” means forming a climax, or in the nature of a climax: *e.g.* “There is nothing climactic about the plot.”

Creditable, credible. — “Creditable” and “creditably” in the sense of “credible” and “credibly” were once, but are no longer, in good use. “Credible” and “credibly” apply to things or acts that may be believed or credited: *e.g.* “It seems hardly credible,” “I am credibly informed of it.” “Creditable” and “creditably” apply to things or acts that are in good repute or to one’s credit: *e.g.* “Your work is creditable to you,” “He paints very creditably.”

Deadly, deathly. — “Deathly” in the sense of “resembling death” — as “She was deathly pale” — is preferable to “deadly,” since “deadly” means also inflicting death, as “a deadly blow,” “a deadly poison.”

Equable, equitable. — That is “equable” which is even or uniform; that is “equitable” which is characterized by fairness or equity. We speak of an “equable” temper or temperature, of an “equitable” decision or distribution of property.

Exceptionable, exceptional. — “Exceptionable” means liable to exception, open to criticism, objectionable, and is now used chiefly with negative words: *e.g.* “In her conduct there was nothing exceptionable.” “Exceptional” means making an exception, out of the ordinary course: *e.g.* “These documents were of exceptional value.”

Exceedingly, excessively. — “Exceedingly” means to a very great degree, “excessively” to an undue degree. One may be “exceedingly” polite without being disagreeably so; to be “excessively” polite is to make politeness offensive.

Human, humane. — “Human” means pertaining to man as man, as “human nature,” “human sacrifices.” “Humane” means compassionate: *e.g.* “The jailer was the most humane man of his class I ever knew.” Formerly the two words had the same meaning.

Ingenuous, ingenious. — “Ingenuous” means frank, open, undisguised; “ingenious” means clever in the way of invention or contrivance: we speak of an “ingenuous” countenance, of an “ingenious” plan. These words also had once the same meaning. At present, the noun akin in meaning to “ingenious” is “ingenuity,” that akin to “ingenuous” is “ingenuousness.”

Latest, last. — “Latest,” the superlative of “late,” contains a distinct reference to time, as “the latest news,” “the latest fashion.” “Last,” which was originally a contraction of “latest,” is now used of that which comes after all others in space or in time, as “the last house in the street,” “The Last of the Mohicans,” “the last day of the week.”

Luxurious, luxuriant. — “Luxurious” means abounding in luxuries: *e.g.* “She has a luxurious winter home.”

“Luxuriant” means exuberant in growth: *e.g.* “The foliage is luxuriant this year.”

Prominent, predominant, eminent. — As applied to character, “prominent” means standing out so as to be conspicuous; “predominant,” superior in strength or in influence; “eminent,” exalted in station or in repute. There may be many “prominent” traits in a person’s character, but there can be only one “predominant” trait; the character itself may or may not be “eminent.” A similar distinction exists between the nouns “prominence,” “predominance,” “eminence.”

Sensible, sensitive. — “Sensible of” means aware of: *e.g.* “I am sensible of your kindness.” “Sensitive to” means affected by: *e.g.* “He is very sensitive to cold.”

EXERCISE CXIX

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each adjective and adverb: —

Barbaric, barbarous; ceremonious, ceremonial¹; climatic, climactic; creditable, credible; deadly, deathly; equable, equitable; exceptionable, exceptional; exceedingly, excessively; human, humane; ingenuous, ingenious; latest, last; luxurious, luxuriant; prominent, predominant, eminent; sensible (of), sensitive (to).

EXERCISE CXX

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the expression in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. That story is not creditable (credible).
2. It was deadly (deathly) cold in the cave.
3. I don’t like exceptionable (exceptional) persons.
4. He is excessively (exceedingly) talkative.
5. She is human (humane).
6. Did you ever know any one more ingenuous (ingenious)?
7. This is his last (latest) attempt.
8. He was sensible of (sensitive to) their slights.

¹See pages 77-78.

EXERCISE CXXI

Insert in each blank the proper expression ;¹ explain your choice : —

Barbaric, barbarous

1. So — a custom should not be adopted by a civilized people.
2. She has a leaning toward the — in dress.
3. Italy at the beginning of her history was —.

Climatic, climactic

1. A little time must be allowed for the fish to become used to their new — conditions.
2. Macaulay's paragraphs are often —.
3. No — action has sensibly changed the hues of the lava.

Creditable, credible

1. Such folly is scarcely — ; I prefer not to believe it.
2. The places were filled in a manner — to the government.
3. Clive made a — use of his riches.

Deadly, deathly

1. The — stillness was broken only by the dismal caw of a crow.
2. The bite of the rattlesnake is —.
3. Her hands were — cold.

Equable, equitable

1. An — temper is the greatest gift a man can possess.
2. I will take the land at an — valuation.
3. It is necessary for him to seek a more — climate.

Exceptionable, exceptional

1. Though he was on the lookout for flaws, he saw nothing — in her manner.
2. These documents were of — value.
3. Hamlet is an — character.

¹ In some cases one word or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Exceedingly, excessively

1. To be —— civil is sometimes as bad as to be uncivil.
2. For a time the talk was —— entertaining, but it became —— light and ended in froth.
3. It has been an —— hot day.

Human, humane

1. The weapons of to-day are deadly, and therefore ——.
2. The —— Society gave him a medal for saving a life.
3. In the time of Abraham, —— sacrifices were common among his heathen neighbors.

Ingenuous, ingenious

1. It is an —— contrivance for picking locks.
2. He was a handsome youth, with an —— face.
3. The Patent Office records show how —— Americans are.

Latest, last

1. They are the —— men in the procession.
2. What is the —— news?
3. Have you read the —— novel?

Luxurious, luxuriant

1. After riding six miles over pine barrens we came to a hollow covered with the most —— tropical vegetation.
2. Their style of living was quietly ——.
3. The place was most ——ly furnished.

Prominent, predominant, eminent

1. The Indian race is marked by —— cheek-bones.
2. Byron is one of the most —— poets.
3. The English are —— over the Boers.
4. I fear he will not become —— in his profession.

Sensible of, sensitive to

1. He is most —— things that touch himself.
2. He was altogether too —— ridicule.
3. I was —— a change in his manner toward me, but I would not appear to be —— it.

Adjectives or adverbs that are similar, but not identical, in meaning are sometimes confounded with one another:—

I

This eulogy on Chaucer has not been recognized as deserved.

II

This eulogy on Chaucer has not been recognized as *condign*.

“*Condign*,” which literally means altogether worthy, was formerly applied to thanks, praise, reward, as well as to punishment; but now the word is rarely used except in the phrase “*condign punishment*”—that is, punishment commensurate with the crime.

I

As we walked along the narrow, almost Lilliputian, streets, we felt like giants.

II

As we walked along the narrow, almost *cunning*, streets, we felt like giants.

In the United States, *cunning* is often incorrectly used to mean something that is small and attractive, as “a cunning little girl.” Properly used, “cunning” means skilfully contrived or executed, as “carved boxes of cunning workmanship”; or, in an evil sense, skilful in accomplishing one’s end by covert means, crafty, as “a cunning thief.”

I

The shade is very simple, but it has a clever design.

II

The shade is awfully simple, but it has a *cute* design.

Cute (a contraction of “acute,” which means sharp, keen) is used colloquially in the United States as a vague term of admiration; but it should be avoided in both conversation and writing.

I

It is strange that Charles doesn’t write to me.

II

It is *funny* that Charles doesn’t write to me.

Funny is often incorrectly used of that which is strange or odd but not at all amusing.

I

Over the pastry they were making together, they grew intimate.

II

Over this *mutual* pastry they grew intimate.

"*Mutual* pastry" is nonsense, for "mutual" always implies a reciprocal relation. The writer, who referred to two children engaged in making sand-pies together, probably meant to speak of the "pastry" as their joint work.

I

He employed a common friend to engage Dryden to compose a tribute to his wife's memory.

II

He employed a *mutual* friend to engage Dryden to compose a tribute to his wife's memory.

Macaulay stigmatized the use of *mutual friend* for "common friend" as "a vulgarism." The phrase in this sense had made its appearance in print long before Dickens, by the publication of "Our Mutual Friend," put it into everybody's mouth; but it has never been in good use, and it is not likely to be, for the reason that it does not express the meaning intended. If *A* is *B*'s friend and *B* is *A*'s friend, they may be called mutual friends, for there is reciprocity in the relationship; if friendship exists between *A* and *C* and between *B* and *C*, *A* and *C* may be mutual friends, and so may *B* and *C*, but *C* is the friend whom *A* and *B* have in common.¹ Even when correctly used, "mutual" in "mutual friends" is superfluous; for it adds nothing to the meaning of "friends."

I

"Quentin Durward" is the best [or better than any other] of Scott's novels.

II

"Quentin Durward" is the best of *any* of Scott's novels.

"Quentin Durward" cannot be "the best of *any* of Scott's novels" — that is, the best of one; it may be the best of all, or better than any other one.²

¹ In W. B. Hodgson's "Errors in the Use of English" are many examples of the correct and the incorrect use of "mutual."

² See page 263.

I

Each man had *lost* an arm.

II

Both men had lost an arm.

In this example, "each" is the proper word; for *both* implies that two men had one arm between them.

I

Every evening I sit by my desk at sunset.

II

Each evening I sit by my desk at sunset.

In this example, *each* is not so good as "every," for the writer is not considering one evening by itself and then another, but is speaking of what happens on all evenings without exception: no one would say, "*Each* dog has his day." It may also be noted that "each" usually refers to the individuals in a definite group, "every" to the individuals in an indefinite total: "Each book has its faults" means each of the books previously spoken of, "Every book has its faults" means all books in existence.¹

I

What Boston needs is not fewer subways but more.

II

What Boston needs is not *less* subways but more.

He was a much smaller man than the other.

He was a much *less* man than the other.

As a rule, "less" refers to quantity or amount, "fewer" to number, "smaller" to size; but occasionally, perhaps on grounds of euphony, "less" is used instead of "fewer," as "There are twenty less men in college than last year." In the sentence "I had less than five dollars in my pocket," "less" is correct; for the money is thought of, not as composed of so many units, but as one sum.

I

The "armies" seldom numbered as many as [*or* seldom numbered] a thousand men.

II

The "armies" seldom numbered as *much* as a thousand men.

"Many" properly refers to number, "much" to quantity. "Much" should not be used with a plural noun.

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under "Every." See also page 123.

I

Three or four men were standing about, idle.

In this example, "about" is the better word; for "about" means here and there, whereas "around," or "round," suggests a circle.

II

Three or four men were standing *around*, idle.

I

He combines the charms of both sexes, and understands both equally well [*or one as well as the other*].

II

He combines the charms of both sexes, and understands either *equally* well.

Equally, which directs attention to more than one object, is not properly used with "either," which directs attention to but one object at a time.

I

The department has grown in a very remarkable manner this year.

II

The department has grown in a *most* remarkable manner this year.

The use of *most* with the indefinite article, as in the sentence under II, has been defended on the ground that "most" is more emphatic than "very"; but the phrase *a most* is not in accordance with the English idiom.

I

He was rather stout [*or decidedly stout*] and had a large face.

II

He was *quite* stout and had a large face.

I stayed long enough to hear several speeches, which impressed me strongly.

I stayed long enough to hear *quite* a number of speeches, which impressed me *quite* a great deal.

I have earned a good deal this summer.

I have earned *quite* a little this summer.

This article disgusts Thackeray to such an extent that he dwells on it for some time.

This article disgusts Thackeray to such an extent that he dwells on it for *quite* a time.

"Quite" is properly used in the sense of "entirely" or "altogether," but not in the sense of "rather," "considerably," or "very," or as a means of vaguely indicating

quantity or size. A recent English writer says that the misuse of no other single word is "more injurious to the effect of literary composition." In the United States, *quite* is so often employed in the sense of "not quite" that an insurance company which advertised itself as "quite safe" found difficulty, it is said, in inducing property-holders to take its policies. The most objectionable use of "quite" is in the expression *quite a* followed by a noun, as in the last three sentences under II.

I

If she had known you were coming, she would certainly have been here, — she wanted so much to please you.

II

If she had known you were coming she would certainly have been here. She wanted *so* to please you.

So in the sense of "so much," which is common in the language of school-girls, is not supported by the best usage. "So" meaning "in such a manner" is correct: *e.g.* "His house was so built as to look like a palace."

I

Elizabeth was too much surprised to answer.

II

Elizabeth was *too* surprised to answer.

Her daughters were much pleased to have her with them.

Her daughters were *very* pleased to have her with them.

Thorkel was very much vexed.

Thorkel was *very* vexed.

"Too" and "very," adverbs of degree, qualify adjectives or adverbs, but not verbs or participles as such: we may properly say "very glad," but not "*very* pleased"; "very angry," but not "*very* vexed." Good use, however, favors "too" and "very" before many present, and some past, participles used as adjectives, — for example, before "exciting," "gratifying," "interesting," "pleasing," "soothing," "terrifying," "accomplished," "devoted," "learned," "tired."¹ The only way to learn what participles may, and what may not, properly be qualified by "too" and "very" is to observe the practice of good authors.

¹ See Dr. Fitzedward Hall's article in the "Nation," October 13, 1892.

I

You are not so young as you once were.

If Goldsmith never rises so high as Sterne, he never sinks so low.

II

You are not *as* young as you once were.

If Goldsmith never rises *as* high as Sterne, he never sinks so low.

"So," not *as*, is correct in a declarative sentence in which the adverb in question is preceded by a negative word; if the negative is removed, "*as . . . as*" becomes correct, — *e.g.* "You are as young as you ever were." When, however, a negative-interrogative sentence is so worded as to imply equality, not to deny it, "*as . . . as*" is correct: *e.g.* "Does not Goldsmith rise as high as Sterne?"

Discriminate between adjectives or adverbs that are similar, but not identical, in meaning.

EXERCISE CXXII

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each adjective and adverb: —

Condign; cunning; funny; mutual; any; both, each, every; less, fewer, smaller; much, many, most; round, about; equally; quite; so, so much; too, too much; very, very much; as . . . as, so . . . as.

EXERCISE CXXIII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the expression in parenthesis and with that which precedes: —

1. He is very funny (odd).
2. They have a mutual (common) interest.
3. This state exports more cotton than all the other states (any other state) in America.
4. She gave an orange to both (each) boys (boy).
5. Each (every) man has his faults.
6. She says she is quite (rather) happy.
7. The doll is so (so much) broken that it cannot be mended.

EXERCISE CXXIV

Insert in each blank the proper expression ;¹ explain your choice :—

Funny, strange

1. Without apparent effort, he could be so — as to keep us in laughter by the hour.
2. Isn't it — that I can't find my watch ?
3. It is — that he never told me of his marriage.

Mutual, common

1. They parted with — good feeling.
2. We have a — friend in Mr. Phelps.
3. They have a — understanding.

Any, all (or no word)

1. I like this poem best of —.
2. St. Peter's is the largest (of) — church(es) in the world.
3. Our cat has a worse temper than — dog(s) I know.
4. A cowboy is the most picturesque of — men.

Both, each, every

1. A volunteer nine was secured from — township(s).
2. I like them —.
3. In — cheek(s) appears a pretty dimple.
4. — man (men) caught a fish.
5. — pupil in the school was present.
6. — man is a coward at some moment of his life.

Less, fewer, smaller

1. They gave us not — but more trains.
2. He owes me — than fifty dollars.
3. Your gloves are of a — size than mine.
4. A proper fraction is — than a unit, because it expresses — parts than a unit contains.
5. Not — than twelve banks in New York failed to-day.
6. Though he had — courses of study than the rules required, he seemed to have — leisure than the other boys.

¹ In some cases one word or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

Much, many

1. We saw as — as twenty tramps on the road to Ayer.
2. We shall need as — as a gallon of ice-cream.
3. He will have as — as twenty barrels of apples.

Round, about

1. Books and toys were scattered —.
2. Are there enough books to go — to-day?
3. We walked idly — the town, looking into the shop-windows.

Most, very

1. Sirius is a — beautiful star.
2. This is the — recent publication of a — famous writer.
3. You will have to admit that she is a — charming girl.

Quite, rather, very

1. The pitcher is — full.
2. The coat he had on looked — the worse for wear.
3. The island is — close to the mainland.
4. The ice-cream is — frozen.

So, so much

1. It was hard to do it; it would hurt her feelings —.
2. It was — written as to be scarcely readable.
3. She was — pleased that she jumped up and down.

Too, too much, very, much, greatly

1. He was — fatigued to eat.
2. Every one affected by the project was — angered.
3. The people are — angry with the ministry.
4. Godfrey Cass, who knew the child, appeared — excited.
5. The marquis was — pleased to see him.
6. I am — tired to go anywhere to-night.
7. I shall be — hurt if you do not make me a visit.
8. She felt — embarrassed.

So, as

1. Are not things — bad as they can be?
2. He is — tall as his brother, but not — tall as I.
3. Miss Ferrier's style is not nearly — good as Miss Austen's.

EXERCISE CXXV

Correct errors in the use of adjectives or adverbs; give your reason for each correction:—

1. Franklin soon acquired quite a position in Philadelphia.
2. Take which you prefer; I like either equally well.
3. Stephen Blank is doing quite a little business drawing lumber.
4. The bears come next, horrid cunning white things.
5. What a cute little dog!

Other adjectives or adverbs sometimes confounded with one another because of a resemblance in meaning are:—

Apparently, evidently, manifestly.—“Apparently” is properly used of that which seems, but may not be, real; “evidently” and “manifestly” are used of that which both seems and is real, but “manifestly” is stronger than “evidently”: *e.g.* “He is apparently well; but evidently [*or manifestly*] he suffers from some hidden grief.”

Average, ordinary.—“Average” implies an arithmetical computation: if *A* loses \$10, *B* \$20, *C* \$30, and *D* \$40, the average loss is \$25. The word is used figuratively by Dr. Holmes in the sentence “The average intellect of five hundred persons, taken as they come, is not very high.” In the sense of “common in occurrence,” “of the usual standard,” “ordinary” is preferable to “average”: *e.g.* “That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in” (Shakspeare).¹

Eligible, suitable.—“Eligible,” which comes from a Latin verb meaning to choose, is correctly used (1) of a man who has certain legal qualifications for office or position, as “No person except a natural-born citizen . . . shall be eligible to the office of president”;² (2) of a person or a thing that in a general sense is fit to be chosen or adopted, as “There were few eligible young

¹ King Lear, i. 4.

² The Constitution of the United States.

men in town," "This is the most eligible course." By a weakening of the latter sense, "eligible" is sometimes used when "suitable" or "desirable" would be better.

Existing, extant. — That is "existing" which has existence: *e.g.* "He bound himself not to adjourn, prorogue, or dissolve the existing parliament without its own consent" (Macaulay). That is "extant" which has escaped the ravages of time (used chiefly of books, manuscripts, etc.): *e.g.* "The Rome of the Middle Ages is to be discovered rather in documents than in extant works of art."

Lengthy, long. — "Lengthy" is used chiefly of discourses or writings, and implies tediousness; "long" is used of anything that has length. A speech may be "long" without being "lengthy."

Mad, angry. — "Mad" means insane: *e.g.* "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts xxvi. 24). In the sense of "angry," it is not in good use.

New, novel. — That is "new" which is not old; that is "novel" which is strange as well as new. A book may be "new" without containing anything "novel."

Palpable, visible. — Literally, "palpable" means perceptible to the touch, a meaning which is exemplified in the famous dagger-scene in "Macbeth":¹ —

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

.

I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.

Figuratively, "palpable" means so plain as to be readily taken hold of by the intellect, as "a palpable truth," "palpable deceit." Literally, "visible" means capable of being seen, as "a visible star"; figuratively, it means apparent at first sight, noticeable, as "visible means of support."

¹ Act ii. scene 1.

Verbal, oral.—“Verbal” means in words, whether spoken or written : *e.g.* “Unless the lower animals have some substitute for verbal symbols . . . they are incapable of general ideas”¹ (James Sully). “Oral” means by word of mouth, spoken : *e.g.* “Oral evidence cannot be substituted for any instrument which the law requires to be in writing”² (Simon Greenleaf). We should in strictness speak of an “oral contract” or an “oral message” when we refer to spoken rather than to written words ; but “verbal contract” and “verbal message” (with “verbal” used in the sense of “oral”) are apparently fixed in the language.

EXERCISE CXXVI

Illustrate by sentences, original or quoted, a correct use of each adjective and adverb : —

Apparently, evidently, manifestly ; average, ordinary ; eligible, suitable ; existing, extant ; lengthy, long ; mad, angry ; new, novel ; palpable, visible ; verbal, oral.

EXERCISE CXXVII

Give the meaning of each sentence in the two forms suggested, with the word in parenthesis and with that which precedes : —

1. His story is apparently (evidently, manifestly) true.
2. What are his average (ordinary) expenses?
3. He is eligible (suitable) for the position.
4. There are few existing (extant) portraits of Milton.
5. He gave long (lengthy) explanations.
6. She became mad (angry).
7. This is a new (novel) style.
8. The atmosphere is not palpable (visible).
9. We had no verbal (oral) communication for more than a dozen

years.

¹ Quoted in the Century Dictionary.

² Quoted in the Standard Dictionary.

EXERCISE CXXVIII

Insert in each blank the proper word;¹ explain your choice: —

Apparently, evidently, manifestly

1. The stranger was — in the prime of manhood.
2. The motion which — belongs to the sun, really belongs to the earth.
3. Our country is — growing in wealth.
4. A straight line is — the shortest distance between two points.

Average, ordinary

1. — conversation is not instructive.
2. The — expenses per man of the Yale class of '95 during freshman year were \$912.
3. The — age of the signers of the Declaration of Independence was nearly forty-four.

Eligible, suitable, desirable

1. The natives of India were declared to be — to any office.
2. So ornate a style is not — to a plain subject.
3. It provides them with a (an) — investment for their savings.
4. They ordained that a list of the — citizens should be made.

Existing, extant

1. The only — British account is that of the monk Gildas.
2. God created all — things.
3. Every citizen should exert himself to remove — evils.

Lengthy, long

1. Cotton Mather wrote many — dissertations.
2. It is a — ride from Ellen's Isle to Stirling.
3. We were wearied by his — explanations.

Mad, angry

1. His sarcastic manner makes me —.
2. — people think others —.
3. There is nothing to get — at.

¹ In some cases one word or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

New, novel

1. A — feature of the entertainment was the "Broom Drill."
2. This is a — kind of bread.
3. Alice had many — experiences in Wonderland.

Palpable, visible

1. When he first came to Rome, she believed that the link which united them had completely snapped; but little by little she had been reminded that it still had a — existence.
2. On so fine a character the least spot is —.
3. They fell into gross and — absurdities.

Verbal, oral

1. Mere — praises, whether spoken or written, are mockery.
2. The — traditions of the Jews floated down from age to age through successive generations.
3. Some slight — changes have been made in the new edition of the book.

Would-be Adjectives and Adverbs. — Some would-be adjectives or adverbs are not English words; some are not in good use as adjectives or adverbs; some adverbs are forced into use as adjectives.

I

Teaching, the do-nothing educators say, is irksome.

Many samples of bought [*or* purchased] articles will be shown.

The coat is neat, with tasteful trimmings.

I give a few recipes for palatable dishes for tea.

The hall of the J. O. U. A. M. was tastefully decorated.

II

Teaching, the do-nothing educators say, is *boresome*.

Many samples of *boughten* articles will be shown.

The coat is neat, with *tasty* trimmings.

I give a few recipes for *tasty* dishes for tea.

The hall of the J. O. U. A. M. was *tastily* decorated.

Boresome is not an English word; *boughten* is not in good use, except rarely in verse when the metre requires it; *tasty* and *tastily* are not in good use anywhere.

I

The statement quoted above
[or The foregoing statement] is
incorrect.

Thus a reconciliation was al-
most brought about.

The bells of a church near by
[or of a neighboring church] ₁
rang the hour of five.

She sat by him who is now her
husband.

This old man was at one time
the [or was the former] servant
of the king.

The enclosed list of questions
is sent to you for a special purpose.

"Above," "almost," "near-by," "now," "one-time,"
"within," are now in good use as adverbs or as prepo-
sitions only ; but "above" seems to be gaining ground
as an adjective¹ and may establish itself in the language,
as "then" has already done in phrases like "the then
ministry."

Avoid adjectives or adverbs that have not been admitted to good
use.

II

The *above* statement is in-
correct.

Thus an *almost* reconciliation
was brought about.

The bells of a *near-by* church
rang the hour of five.

She sat by her *now* husband.

This old man was the *one-time*
servant of the king.

The *within* list of questions is
sent to you for a special purpose.

EXERCISE CXXIX

In place of each italicized expression, substitute one that
is in good use as an adjective : —

1. The same moment the *all but* conviction darted into his mind
that Andrew Falconer, his grandmother's son, lay there before him.
2. The *above* method of contrast is one in which Ruskin excels.
3. She's very *tasty*.
4. This is a *boughten* suit.
5. He returned from a drive to a *near-by* beach.
6. "It would be a bonnie thing," said Miss Bethune, with an *almost*
smile of scorn.

¹The Oxford English Dictionary, however, cites but one instance of this
use of "above," and that is from the work of a writer little known in the
world of letters.

Misplaced Adverbs. — An adverb is often put where it does not belong.

I

He recovered his gun almost without knowing what he did.

II

He recovered his gun without *almost* knowing what he did.

“Almost” qualifies, not “knowing,” but the phrase “without knowing what he did”; it should come before that expression, since it cannot properly come after it.

I

Not all criminals are guilty.

II

All criminals are *not* guilty.

“Not” does not qualify “guilty”; it qualifies “all.” “All criminals are *not* guilty” means that no criminals are guilty, an assertion which the writer did not intend to make; “Not all criminals are guilty” means that some criminals only are guilty.

I

I have rewritten themes in the class-room *only*.¹

II

I have rewritten themes *only* in the class-room.

When he took command, he had only three hundred Englishmen and two hundred Sepoys.

When he took command, he *only* had three hundred Englishmen and two hundred Sepoys.

The word “only” is especially troublesome. Observe how the position of this word affects the meaning of the following sentences: “Only he lost his hat”; “He only lost his hat”; “He lost only his hat,” or “He lost his hat only”; “He lost his only hat.”

So place an adverb as to show unmistakably what word or words it modifies.

EXERCISE CXXX

Put into its proper place any misplaced adverb : —

1. He had scarcely walked five yards before he heard a cough.
2. The maskers were almost dressed alike.

¹ See page 261.

3. Metal reflectors are only used now for cheap search-lights
4. I will only mention some of the best.
5. I only had time to read "King Lear."
6. He only spoke to me, not to you.
7. The coon only comes out in the night-time.
8. I scarcely ever remember having had a rougher walk.
9. His essays were even envied by the professors.
10. All snakes are not poisonous.

Adverb between "To" and the Infinitive. — The question whether an adverb, or an adverbial phrase, should be placed between "to" and the infinitive has been much discussed.

I

I told him not to shoot.

It seems an easy thing simply to stand behind a little lady's chair at table.

Properly and promptly to handle the mass of matter that goes through his hands is a vast undertaking.

II

I told him *to not shoot*.

It seems an easy thing *to simply stand* behind a little lady's chair at table.

To properly and promptly handle the mass of matter that goes through his hands is a vast undertaking.

In each of these examples, the best place for the adverbial expression is immediately before "to."

I

I am not yet old enough to sympathize so thoroughly with a husband as with a lover.

His father telegraphed to him to return instantly.

The soldiers of the guard refused to fight longer.

I take this opportunity to apologize publicly.

He moved to postpone the subject indefinitely.

II

I am not yet old enough *to so thoroughly sympathize* with a husband as with a lover.

His father telegraphed to him *to instantly return*.

The soldiers of the guard refused *to longer fight*.

I take this opportunity *to publicly apologize*.

He moved *to indefinitely postpone* the subject.

In each of these examples, the best place for the adverbial expression is immediately after the infinitive.

I

So to do [*or To do so*] would be to sacrifice truth to convenience.

II

To so do would be to sacrifice truth to convenience.

In this example, "so" may either precede or follow the infinitive; but it gains emphasis by being the first word in the sentence.

I

The question is, whether he will pledge himself to support the candidate loyally and faithfully.

II

The question is, whether he will pledge himself *to loyally and faithfully* support the candidate.

Sometimes, as in this example, the best place for the adverbial expression is at the end of the sentence.

I

She smiled on him so sweetly that she more than consoled him.

II

She smiled on him so sweetly *as to more than console* him.

Sometimes, as in this example, a slight change in phraseology removes any difficulty there may be in placing the adverb.

I

Even such a prospect as this failed to bring peace wholly back to my mind.

II

Even such a prospect as this failed *to wholly restore* peace to my mind.

Even such a prospect as this could not wholly restore peace to my mind.

Occasionally, as in this example, it is impossible to amend the sentence without recasting it. "Wholly failed" is not the meaning; "failed wholly to restore" and "to restore peace wholly to my mind" are ambiguous; "failed to restore wholly peace" is hardly English; "wholly" at the end of the sentence is unbearable.

The prevalence of the clumsy practice of using what is called by Dr. Fitzedward Hall the "cleft infinitive," and by others the "split infinitive," has led some students of language to insist that there is no objection to putting an adverbial expression between "to" and the infinitive. In support of this view, Dr. Hall adduces what at first

sight seems to be a formidable array of citations, ranging from the time of Wickliffe to the present day. It is to be noted, however, that the names of some of the highest authorities on a question of usage — Addison, Goldsmith, and Cardinal Newman, for instance — are not in Dr. Hall's list; that Johnson, Macaulay, and De Quincey are each represented by only one example; and that Dr. Hall is careful to say that he himself habitually avoids the practice which he condones.¹

On the other hand, unpractised writers are precisely those who are most ready to misplace their adverbs. "Many reports of 'Bureaus of Statistics of Labor,' of 'Committees on Internal Improvements,' and of 'Commissioners of Canals,' have lately come under my eye," writes a student of political economy, "and I have watched the English a little, wishing to see what the ordinary legislator or state official knows about composition. The first things to force themselves upon my notice were two glaring defects. Committees would advise a legislature 'to gradually construct,' and 'to properly reform.' Officials would fall into a perfect slough of pronouns; 'they' would refer back to 'each,' and 'it' again to 'they.'"

The one thing to be said in favor of caging an adverb between "to" and the infinitive is that a writer can thus, with least trouble to himself, clearly show that the adverb and the verb belong together. This consideration, which does not affect writers who know their business, would, however, usually be more than counterbalanced by the harshness of the construction.

On the whole, we may conclude that, although usage is to a certain extent divided, the writers who are of the highest authority on questions of this kind either do not employ the construction in question at all, or employ it very sparingly.

Do not put an adverb between "to" and the infinitive.

¹ See his article in the "Nation," April 13, 1893.

EXERCISE CXXXI

Place as advantageously as you can any adverbial phrase that separates "to" from its infinitive; change the phraseology if necessary: —

1. He was ever ready to courageously defend himself.
2. His weakness was so great as to almost wreck his entire life.
3. Portia argued that it was illegal to attempt to wilfully take the life of a Venetian citizen.
4. He tried to mathematically prove to himself that he would not run from a battle.
5. I shall never seem to, as it were, threaten you.
6. Hermes caused the milk-pitcher of the old couple to never be empty.
7. His political enemies tried to in this way impeach his courage.
8. He promises to earnestly try to do better.
9. To really know the man we must read his books.
10. Another project is to in some way modify the power of the House of Lords.
11. He proposed to either largely increase the appropriation or to wholly do away with it.
12. It would be impossible for the president to curtly and ignominiously dismiss his assistant.
13. As the fog cleared, the lifeboat was seen to still gallantly struggle to reach the "Eider."
14. The officials ought to specially and urgently request the public to report affronts.
15. I want her to as far as possible give up letter-writing.

Redundant Adjectives and Adverbs. — An adjective or an adverb that adds nothing to the meaning encumbers a sentence.

I

She of all girls should be the last to complain.

Of all places in the vicinity of Boston, I know of none better worth a visit than Concord.

II

She of all *other* girls should be the last to complain.

Of all places in the vicinity of Boston, I know of no *other* better worth a visit than Concord.

If "all" girls and "all" places are under consideration, there can be no *other*. We may properly say, "No place is better worth a visit than Concord," or "Concord is better worth a visit than any other place."¹

I

Children play together without bothering their heads about the social positions of their papas and mammas.

II

Children play together without bothering their heads about the social positions of their *different* papas and mammas.

The fact that "papas" and "mammas" are plural makes *different* superfluous.

I

This is a preferable place.

II

This is a *more* preferable place.

Since "preferable" in itself means more desirable, *more* is redundant. The writer might properly have said "far preferable."

I

The obsequies were very solemn.

II

The *funeral* obsequies were very solemn.

Dunstan had the habit of spending money.

Dunstan had the *habitual* habit of spending money.

John Smith, furniture-mover.

John Smith, *practical* furniture-mover.

The style of his essay is obscured by wordiness.

The style of his essay is obscured by *too much* wordiness.

He tore the paper in halves.

He tore the paper in *two* halves.

According to their custom, they take an hour's ride at 6.30 o'clock every morning.

According to their *usual* custom, they take an hour's ride at 6.30 o'clock every morning.

In each of the sentences under II, the meaning of the italicized expression is obviously included in the meaning of the following noun.

I

He was absorbed in thoughts of the boy,

II

He was absorbed with *exclusive* thoughts of the boy,

¹ See pages 263, 278.

His acquaintance was not limited to men of fashion.

From one of his hands hung his opera-hat.

They were associated in many literary enterprises.

He was to her what the Beast was to the Beauty when the Beast began to be in love.

In each of the sentences under II, the meaning of the italicized word is included in the meaning of the verb.

I

We are unanimous in desiring [*or* We all desire] a change.

Celia wished to accompany Rosalind; therefore they set out together.

We use the same tools.

They will be as well used by the Republicans as they are now.

And then he had his own annoyances.

We shall discuss the poetry of Spenser, especially as to its sources.

This was very different from the other case.

We parted disgusted with each other's opinions.

He had one of those attacks to which he was subject.

Use some similar word.

I had noticed this peculiarity throughout the book.

In each of the sentences under II, the meaning of the italicized word is included in the meaning of some other word or words in the sentence.

II

His acquaintance was not limited to men of fashion *only*.

From one of his hands his opera-hat hung *pendent*.

They were associated *together* in many literary enterprises.

He was to her what the Beast was to the Beauty when the Beast *first* began to be in love.

We are *all* unanimous in desiring a change.

Celia wished to accompany Rosalind; therefore they *both* set out together.

We *both* use the same tools.

They will be *equally* as well used by the Republicans as they are now.

And then he had his own *individual* annoyances.

We shall discuss the poetry of Spenser *more* especially as to its sources.

This was very *much* different from the other case.

We parted *mutually* disgusted with each other's opinions.

He had one of those attacks to which he *often* was subject.

Use some *other* similar word.

I had noticed this peculiarity throughout the *whole* book.

I

The snow is vanishing.

Nuts were dropping.

The eleven dollars had dwindled to three.

Lowell started on a radically different basis.

They are going to level it.

I will start them well.

I'll see you later.

He started as an athlete.

At the election yesterday, E. F. Sherman won.

II

The snow is vanishing *away*.

Nuts were dropping *down*.

The eleven dollars had dwindled *down* to three.

Lowell started *in* upon a radically different basis.

They are going to level it *off*.

I will start them *off* well.

I'll see you later *on*.

He started *out* as an athlete.

At the election yesterday, E. F. Sherman won *out*.

In the effort to be emphatic, untrained writers often use superfluous adverbs, as in the sentences under II.

I

Please button my boots.

The book ends, however, with the expected marriage.

After ten years of successful business, the firm failed.

The command of the Congo opened a new career to commerce.

Nothing could be seen ; all was shrouded in darkness.

A long journey weakens her.

He has weighed the situation with great care.

II

Please button *up* my boots.

The book ends *up*, however, with the expected marriage.

After ten years of successful business the firm failed *up*.

The command of the Congo opened *up* a new career to commerce.

Nothing could be seen ; all was shrouded *up* in darkness.

A long journey weakens her *up*.

He has weighed *up* the situation with great care.

In none of the sentences under II does *up* add anything to the meaning, and in some it makes good verbs vulgar. When, however, the addition of "up" affects the meaning of the verb, as in "bring up," "burn up," "cast up," "draw up," "get up," "give up," "hold up," "jump up," "keep up," "take up," the adverb is, of course, useful.

Avoid as a hindrance any adjective or adverb that does not contribute in some way to your meaning.

EXERCISE CXXXII

Strike out any redundant adjectives or adverbs : —

1. This picture is, of all others, the one I like best.
2. He was far from being a candidate for funeral obsequies.
3. Matters were finally settled up between the king and Prospero.
4. The tricks of starting the page, filling it out, and ending it up become dear to the mind.
5. Mrs. Craven started in on a fight for the estate.
6. He will find out his mistake later on.
7. Which do you prefer most, apples or oranges?
8. Whenever I meet him he always stops me.
9. Finally Rosalind disclosed her true identity.
10. The exercises are appointed for 2 P.M. to-morrow afternoon.
11. The central pith of the report is as follows.
12. Secluded and alone, he now partook of his solitary repast.
13. When everything was all ready, they started off.
14. He was a boy of eighteen years old.
15. If the ground is uneven, they just level it off with a shovel.
16. Once the two twins were shipwrecked while on a sailing voyage.
17. The purple bird was once a royal king named Picus.
18. A large search-light will show a sail at a distance of three or four miles away.
19. Each of the provinces was ruled over by a duke.
20. You will find enclosed within a cheque for the amount.
21. The mud falls off from the wheels and makes the street dirty.
22. Before you go you must first finish your work.
23. He did it equally as well as his friends.
24. It must be ten years ago since he left town.
25. Collect together all the fragments.
26. He has the universal good will of everybody.
27. Please raise up the window.
28. They always entered school together every morning.
29. He went away, but soon reappeared again.
30. I was deceived by false misrepresentations.
31. This question opened up the whole subject.
32. Their united energies combined were sufficient to do it.
33. Both the children stared at each other.
34. He wove it together with the dexterity of an artist.

35. At this college I spent a year in the study of mere dead languages, and in the society of yet living pedagogues.

36. They had not time to cut off mutually each other's head.

37. The narrative closes at the end with a quotation from Holmes.

Omitted Adjectives and Adverbs.—An adjective or an adverb required by the sense is sometimes omitted.

I

You have more good nature,
Catherine, than anybody else [*or*
any other person] living.

II

You have more good nature,
Catherine, than anybody living.

“Catherine” cannot have more good nature than *anybody living*, for that expression implies that she herself is not living.¹

I

It is more important as well as
more interesting to study the
principles regulating our policy
toward foreign states.

II

It is more important as well as
interesting to study the principles
regulating our policy toward
foreign states.

If the writer had repeated “more” before “interesting,” he would have made his meaning clearer.

I

As Gulliver behaved himself
well, he was set at liberty.

II

As Gulliver behaved himself,
he was set at liberty.

The verb “behave,” like the noun “behavior,” requires a qualifying word to determine the meaning.

Never omit an adjective or an adverb that is needed to make the meaning clear.

EXERCISE CXXXIII

Supply any adjectives or adverbs needed to complete the meaning : —

1. Noah and his family outlived all the people who lived before the flood.

2. You will be more comfortable here than anywhere.

¹ See pages 263, 278, 295–296.

3. This engraving of mine I like better than any I have.
4. If you cannot behave yourself, you had better stay at home.
5. He is more skilful as well as ingenious than his brother.

Double Negatives. — In old English, double negatives abound ; but the best modern usage condemns them.

I

He didn't eat any dinner, I think.

He crossed the threshold of his chamber, into which no one ever penetrated, any more than into the recesses of his heart.

He hardly understood it.

II

He didn't eat any dinner, I *don't* think.

He crossed the threshold of his chamber, into which, *no* more than into the recesses of his heart, no one ever penetrated.

He did *not* hardly understand it.

In each of the sentences under II, the writer has, by doubling his negative, violated the rules of grammar that are accepted at the present time. In the third example, "hardly" is itself a negative ; it means "almost not."

I

That did no good either.
That didn't do any good either.

II

That did no good *neither*.

Neither at the end of a negative sentence used to be, but is not now, in good use ; it has shared the fate of other double negatives. "Either" at the end of a negative sentence is good English : —

"You are early astir," said I.

"Not so early either," replied the boy.

I

I have seen her but once.
She had written but once.
Marianne has the idea that nobody can love more than once [*or* that a person can love but once].

II

I have *not* seen her but once.
She had *never* written but once.
Marianne has the idea that nobody can love *but* once.

The little word "but" is used so often, and in so many ways, that in a given sentence its exact function may

be obscure. If “only” be substituted for “but” in the sentences under II, the double negatives are at once apparent: few, even of those who write “I have not seen her but once,” would write “I have not seen her *only* once.”

Avoid double negatives.

EXERCISE CXXXIV

Rid each sentence of the double negative: —

1. I have never had but twenty-five dollars for myself.
2. They hadn't but one child.
3. I don't hardly believe it will rain.
4. He is so changed that no one hardly would know him.
5. I don't remember only five novels.
6. Nobody can have but one chance.
7. He won't be chosen, I don't think.

“Can but” or “Cannot but”?—Though “can but” and “cannot but” have almost the same meaning, there is a slight distinction between them, which is shown in the following examples: —

If worst comes to worst, I can but die.

The fever is so violent that, without a miracle, he cannot but die.

“I can but die” means that I can only die, that all I can do is to die; “he cannot but die” means that he cannot help dying, that he cannot live.

“Can but,” “could but,” “cannot but,” “could not but,” are properly used in the following passages: —

“Can you manage to climb over that wall?”

“I can but try.”

If the doctor could but have seen it!

It cannot but be obvious to them that, though they see your Lordship's admirers everywhere, they meet with very few of your well-wishers at Paris or at Rome. — ADDISON.

She could not but appreciate the readiness with which her desires were attended to.

I

II

With all your modesty, you cannot but know that you are a welcome guest.

With all your modesty, you *can but* know that you are a welcome guest.

“You *can but* know” means that you cannot do more than know; “you cannot but know” means that you cannot help knowing, — obviously the writer’s meaning.

Distinguish between “can but” and “cannot but.”

EXERCISE CXXXV

Insert in each blank the proper expression, “can but” or “cannot but”: —

He will be the right man, if he — persuade the managers to take him.

Your favor of September the 20th has been duly received, and I — be gratified by it.

The carrier — inform him that he has orders to deliver the goods at Great Ormond Street.

One — feel that this is a privilege.

CHAPTER IX

PREPOSITIONS

Vulgarisms. — Some blunders in the use of prepositions are, or should be, confined to the illiterate.

I

You should see them come to get their wages.

Of course she will always love it for his sake.

II

You should see them come *for* to get their wages.

In course she will always love it for his sake.

“*For* to” and “*in* course,” which were formerly in good use, are now vulgar.

I

He asked whether John was at home.

II

He asked whether John was *to* home.

No one who remembers that “to” implies motion toward a place will say “*to* home” for “at home.”

I

Consider what is proposed to you.

I did not recollect saying that he had a cane.

She replied, “Not that I remember.”

II

Consider *of* what is proposed to you.

I did not recollect *of* saying that he had a cane.

She replied, “Not that I remember *of*.”

“Consider *of*,” “recollect *of*,” and “remember *of*” are gross instances of the common fault of adding an unnecessary preposition to a verb.

I

It belonged to him of whom I have made mention [*or* him whom I have mentioned].

II

It belonged to him whom I have made mention *on*.

The expression "make mention" requires the preposition "of."

Avoid vulgarisms in the use of prepositions.

EXERCISE CXXXVI

In place of any vulgarisms, substitute expressions that are in reputable use:—

1. "Same fox! in course it was; why shouldn't it be the same?" said Tom.
2. I do not remember of doing much writing.
3. We've got to stay to a hotel.
4. Why don't you consider of the question?

Misused Prepositions.— Since the sole office of prepositions is to indicate relations between the words which they connect, no rules as to the choice between this one and that can be prescribed. The best, if not the only, way for us to learn to be accurate in this matter is to note the practice of the best speakers and writers and to follow it closely, in the hope that we may, in course of time, choose the right prepositions without conscious thought.

I

By kneeling down in the snow,
he could look into the dell.

II

By kneeling down *among* the
snow, he could look into the dell.

"In" expresses the relation of a person or a thing to a surrounding mass or substance, as "a man in the snow," "a boy in the water," "a foot in the mud." "Among," now rarely used before a singular noun unless it be a collective noun thought of as plural, usually expresses the relation of a person or a thing to the members of a surrounding group, or the relation of one member of a class to others of the same class, as "a lion among ladies," "one among us."

I

The greatest masters of critical
learning differ from one another
[or differ among themselves].

II

The greatest masters of critical
learning differ *among* one another.

"*Among* one another" (that is, "*one among* another") is almost as bad as "*among* him."

I

This kind of composition was first used in Greece.

He was born at Tipton, Iowa.

II

This kind of composition was first used *at* Greece.

He was born *in* Tipton, Iowa.

"In" is used before proper names of continents, countries, states, counties, seas, and harbors, as "in Africa," "in England," "in Kentucky," "in Putnam County," "in the Baltic," "in New York Harbor"; before the names of important, especially capital, cities, as "in London," "in Paris," "in Berlin," "in Washington"; before the name of the place—if not very small—in or near which the speaker lives, as "I am living this winter in Cambridge"; and, by courtesy, before the name of the place in which the person addressed lives, as "Do you still live in Evanston?" "At" is used before proper names of small islands,¹ as "at Coney Island"; and before the names of unimportant places, as "at Seal Harbor," "at Ducktown." The choice between "in" and "at" is sometimes a matter of opinion as to the importance of the place spoken of, and sometimes a matter of euphony. When, however, the meaning is "within the limits of" a place, however unimportant, "in" is proper, as "We spent three hours in Queenstown"; when the intention is to express slight contact with a city, however important, "at" is proper, as "We touched at Queenstown without landing."

I

Evangeline always found that Gabriel had just left the place to which she came.

II

Evangeline always found that Gabriel had just left the place *at* which she came.

¹ In England, but not in the United States, "in" is used before the names of small islands if they are very near, as "in the Isle of Wight."

“Come *at*” in the literal sense of “arrive at” was once, but is no longer, proper. It is still in good use to express the idea of obstacles overcome: *e.g.* “His real meaning is hard to come at.”

I

II

I began¹ with two hundred pages a day, and kept on at that rate for two years.

I commenced¹ *at* two hundred pages a day, and kept it up for two years.

It was only by his advice that she finished.

It was only *at* his advice that she finished.

Marjorie's papa went deliberately to work to see if he could melt her with a pathetic story.

Marjorie's papa went deliberately *at* work to see if he could melt her with a pathetic story.

We may begin “at” the two hundredth page, but we begin “with,” or “at the rate of,” two hundred pages a day. We may do a thing “at” a person's suggestion, “by” his advice, or “with” his consent. A man may be “at” work, but he goes “to” work.

I

II

Besides the planets usually seen, other stars come into sight.

Beside the planets usually seen, other stars come into sight.

In this example, “besides” is the right preposition, for it means in addition to: “Beside” properly means by the side of, as “He leadeth me beside the still waters”; or apart from, as “That is beside the question”; or out of one's senses, as “I was beside myself for joy.” The distinction between the two prepositions is sometimes neglected; but it is observed by careful writers, unless euphony forbids.

I

II

I have no decided preference among several dances.

I have no decided preference *between* several dances.

In such sentences as that under consideration, “among” is the proper word when the reference is to more than

¹ See page 226.

two persons or things, or to more than two groups of persons or things; "between" is correct when the reference is to two only. We may speak, for example, of the relations "among" (not *between*) twenty or thirty school-boys, and of the relations "between" (not *among*) the boys in a school and their teachers. "Between" is, however, properly used of more than two persons or things (or two groups of persons or things) when the mind is fixed on but two at a time, as "What is the difference between gold and silver and iron?" "It is still the only word available to express the relation of a thing to many surrounding things severally and individually, *among* expressing a relation to them collectively and vaguely: we should not say 'the space lying among the three points,' or 'a treaty among three powers,' or 'the choice lies among the three candidates in the select list.'" ¹

I

Antonio and Bassanio were bosom friends, who exchanged confidences with each other [*or* who exchanged confidences].

She made a resolution with every mouthful never to say one word to that magpie again.

"*Between* each other" (that is, "each *between* the other") is almost as bad as "*between* him." A resolution may be made between every two mouthfuls, but not between every one. Blunders of this class, obvious as they are, may be found in the writings of authors of repute.

I

At times he seems to have paid no regard to a person's feelings.

We may have regard "for," but we pay regard "to," a person or his feelings.

II

Antonio and Bassanio were bosom friends, who exchanged confidences *between* each other.

She made a resolution *between* every mouthful never to say one word to that magpie again.

II

At times he seems to have paid no regard *for* a person's feelings.

¹ See the Oxford English Dictionary, under "Between."

I

His brother threatened to thrash him severely ; but to no purpose.

“ For no purpose ” means without any object in view, for no reason ; “ to no purpose ” means without result, in vain.

I

Judged by this standard, his conclusion is natural.

On purely selfish grounds, hate and revenge should be avoided.

II

His brother threatened to thrash him severely ; but *for* no purpose.

Judged *from* this standard, his conclusion is natural.

From purely selfish grounds, hate and revenge should be avoided.

We judge “ from ” a point of view, “ by ” a standard. Hate and revenge should be avoided “ from ” purely selfish motives, “ on ” purely selfish grounds.

I

The old clock on the stairs frightened us by striking two.

He put the dish within reach.

I went to ask for his assent and signature to the petition.

II

The old clock on the stairs frightened us *in* striking two.

He put the dish *in* reach.

I went to ask for his assent and signature *in* the petition.

The sentences under II show some of the numerous ways in which “ in ” is incorrectly used in place of a preposition that would express the exact relation between the words which it connects.

I

When he came into the room and saw the caskets in which he was to find happiness or sorrow, his heart sank.

Before his arrival, the lady falls into the hands of Comus.

His duty had forced him into arms against his king.

At Cambridge, a private of the Salvation Army got into the car.

II

When he came *in* the room and saw the caskets in which he was to find happiness or sorrow, his heart sank.

Before his arrival, the lady falls *in* the hands of Comus.

His duty had forced him *in* arms against his king.

At Cambridge, a private of the Salvation Army got *in* the car.

According to present usage, motion from without to within certain limits is expressed by "into," presence or action within certain limits by "in": *e.g.* "At our approach the turtles slid from the log into the water," "We saw a trout swimming in the clear water." In old English, "in" with the accusative expressed what is now expressed by "into," "in" with the dative what is now expressed by "in"; later, the disappearance of the case distinctions led to the introduction of "into" as the equivalent of the old "in" with the accusative. Though "into" is now the usual word after verbs of motion, "in" is retained after such verbs in many idiomatic phrases, — as "break in pieces," "call in question," "cut in halves," "dash in pieces," "fall in love," "fly in the face of Providence," "run in debt," "split in two."¹

I

He was flung like a cur into the mud.

They hurled themselves into the sea.

Then he would turn away, and Harry would throw himself into his chair.

II

He was flung like a cur *in* the mud.

They hurled themselves *in* the sea.

Then he would turn away, and Harry would throw himself *in* his chair.

With the verbs "fling," "hurl," "throw," and the like, "in" remained in good use long after the introduction of "into"; but "into" is now usually preferred.

I

The dentist was trying to put his forceps into my mouth.

They were all to be put into the chest with her wedding clothes.

II

The dentist was trying to put his forceps *in* my mouth.

They were all to be put *in* the chest with her wedding clothes.

The choice between "in" and "into" with "put" is especially perplexing. When, as in these examples, the idea is that of putting an object into a receptacle, the

¹ Many examples of the old uses of "in" may be found in the Oxford English Dictionary.

tendency of the best modern usage is to say "put into"; but no one hesitates to use "in" in expressions like "Put him in prison," "Put your ticket in your pocket." When the idea is that of placing¹ an object in a particular spot, "in" is usually preferred with "put," as it is with "lay," "deposit," and "place": *e.g.* "Put the table in the corner of the room," "Lay the neckties in the drawer," "Deposit your money in the bank," "Place the books in a row."

I

I am going to town this afternoon.

II

I am going *in* town this afternoon.

In some places in the United States—in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for example—"going *in* town" is often heard; but "going to town" is preferred by those who are careful in the use of language.

I

This discovery was made as soon as I was fairly in the room.

II

This discovery was made as soon as I was fairly *into* the room.

In this example, "in" is the proper word; for the writer speaks of himself, not as going into the room, but as being already there.

I

We shall be going in to dinner directly.

II

We shall be going *into* dinner directly.

The speaker meant to use, not the preposition *into*, but the adverb "in" and the preposition "to."

I

The "Boston Advertiser" thus hints at the size of the subway.

II

The "Boston Advertiser" thus hints *of* the size of the subway.

The gentlemen pride themselves on having one of the best banquets ever given in the village.

The gentlemen pride themselves *of* having one of the best banquets ever given in the village.

¹ For the distinction between "place" and "put," see page 223.

We may give a hint “of” a thing, but we hint “at” it.
We may be proud “of” having something, but we pride ourselves “on” having it.

I

There was no use in pressing
the matter.

II

There was no use *of* pressing
the matter.

Before a gerund, the noun “use” is followed by “in.”

I

Of course the difference of
character in [*or* the difference in
character between] the two men
affected their writings.

II

Of course the difference of
character *of* the two men affected
their writings.

We speak of a difference “of” character, weight, height, age, etc., “in” two men, or of a difference “between” two men “in” character, etc.

Enough examples have been given to show that “of” is greatly overworked by unskilful writers.

I

Gabriel, although at the point
of death, recognized her.

II

Gabriel, although *on* the point
of death, recognized her.

“At the point of death,” “at the point of starvation,” are English idioms. “On the point of” is correct when it is followed by a gerund denoting some act or action: *e.g.* “I was just on the point of writing to you.”

I

His wages are deposited to his
credit.

II

His wages are deposited *on* his
credit.

The speaker gave us general criticisms, but to this particular essay he devoted little time.

The speaker gave us general criticisms, but *on* this particular essay he devoted little time.

We deposit wages “to” a man’s credit, devote time “to” a matter.

I

Dickens wrote at first under
the signature of “Boz.”

II

Dickens wrote at first *over* the
signature of “Boz.”

In a literal sense, the writing on a page is *over* (that is, above) the signature; but "under the signature" has the authority of the best usage. A similar idiom appears in "under the hand of," "under my hand and seal."

I

Hardly a week after his arrival
the mob raged in front of his hotel.

II

Hardly a week *since* his arrival
the mob raged in front of his hotel.

"After" means subsequent to, or later than, a certain point of time or period of time; "since" takes into account the intervening time as well.

I

Up to [*or Till*] that time I had
held the prevailing idea about it.

II

Up *till* that time I had held
the prevailing idea about it.

"Up to" is now preferred to "up *till*," for "till" in itself means "up to."

I

He directed our attention to a
point far out at sea.

II

He directed our attention to a
point far out *to* sea.

I shall be late at [*or for*] dinner.

I shall be late *to* dinner.

In each of the sentences under II, *to*, which usually implies motion, is used with words that suggest no such idea. "Late *to* dinner" is, however, so familiar in conversation that it cannot be absolutely condemned.

I

Her voice was different from
any other voice he had heard.

II

Her voice was different *to* any
other voice he had heard.

His longer poems are of a different stamp from his shorter ones.

His longer poems are of a different stamp *than* his shorter ones.

"Different *to*" is often heard and written in England; but "different from" is preferred by the best authors there, and is the form in general use among educated persons in the United States. "Different *than*" and "differently *than*" are found in the works of some good authors, "as the result of mere heedlessness."¹

¹ Fitzedward Hall: Modern English.

I

Byron's "Farewell" was written after his separation from his wife.

Byron's difficulty "with" his wife led to his separation "from" her.

I

This love becomes merged in the great love of his life.

Those who write "merged *with*" forget that the verb "merge" implies that a thing is sunk, lost, or swallowed up in another. Some good writers use "into" with "merge," but the best usage at present seems to favor "in."

Other words that require special prepositions are given in the following list:¹—

II

Byron's "Farewell" was written after his separation *with* his wife.

II

This love becomes merged *with* the great love of his life.

abhorrence of	blend with	convenient for or to
absolve from	change for (a thing)	conversant with
absorbed in	change with (a person)	correspond to or with
accord with	characteristic of	(a thing)
acquiesce in	charge to (a person)	correspond with (a person)
acquit of	charge with (a crime)	
adapted to or for	cognizant of	dependent on (but, independent of)
affinity between, to, or with	coincide with	derogatory to
agree to (a proposal)	compare to or with	differ from (= be different from)
agree upon (a course)	comply with	
agree with (a person)	confer on (= give to)	differ with or from (in opinion)
alive to	confer with (= talk with)	
angry at or with	confide in (= trust in)	disappointed in
assent to (but, dissent from)	confide to (= entrust to)	distrust (noun) of
associate with (but, dissociate from)	conform to	emigrate from (but, immigrate into, migrate from and to)
attachment to	conformity with or to	
averse to or from	confronted by or with	estrangle from
	contrast with	familiar with

¹ Some of the words in this list are taken from a similar list in Professor Meiklejohn's "English Language." Changes have been made in several cases, and many words have been added.

glad of	need (noun) of	reconcile to or with
grate on	originate in	revenge for (an injury)
haunter for or after	part from or with	revenge on (a person)
imbue with	persecution of	search for (but, in search of)
immerse in	pine for	set out for
impregnable to	possessed of or with	strive for
infuse into	profit by	a taste for (art)
inherent in	protest against	taste of (food)
instil into	pursuance of	thirst for or after
inveigh against	rail at	transformed into
involve in	recognizable by	twit with
martyr to	recoil from	

Use the preposition that expresses your meaning exactly.

EXERCISE CXXXVII

Give original or quoted sentences in which the expressions in the foregoing list are used correctly.

EXERCISE CXXXVIII

Insert in each blank the proper preposition; ¹ give the reason for your choice: —

Among, between

1. He divided the apples — the five boys.
2. There was a generous rivalry — the two friends.
3. I have no preference — Tennyson's poems.

Among, in

1. — the flowers I found a four-leaved clover.
2. — the crowd were some pickpockets.
3. His hair, though a little thin, had not a trace of gray — it.

At, in

1. We shall spend the summer — a little town — Canada.
2. They live — New York, and have a summer house — Block Island.
3. When shall we arrive — Rome?
4. I am eager to visit a hundred places — Florence.

¹In some cases one preposition or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

At, by, with, to

1. Please begin — the fifth page of the second chapter.
2. You will not go to the seashore — my advice.
3. She went reluctantly — work to alter the dress.
4. Mr. Burns began — two hundred dollars a year.
5. He went to Buffalo — my suggestion.
6. If I cannot go — your consent, I will stay at home.

Beside, besides

1. Have you nothing to tell us — what we have already heard?
2. The boy who sat — her was evidently her brother.
3. — disheartening forebodings, there were real troubles enough.

In, into, to

1. Wanted, a Protestant woman to go — the country.
2. Cut the apple — halves, and throw one half — the pan.
3. Portia, disguising herself as a doctor of law, came — court.
4. This system must not be carried — our new possessions.
5. This merging of self — mankind is noble.
6. I went — town to call on Miss Fairweather.

Since, after

1. It is nearly a century — the battle of Waterloo.
2. — my arrival at Troy I went directly to bed.
3. — my arrival at Troy I have been sleeping well.

EXERCISE CXXXIX

Insert in each blank the proper preposition; if more than one may be used, explain the meaning with each: —

1. — the Cuban programme he protests.
2. It is quite a different affair — that of Moffat's.
3. The idea of setting out — Australia at a few days' notice took him by surprise.
4. Both sides were fully alive — the vital importance of the subject.
5. The number of people who consume one's time — no purpose is almost countless.
6. Up — that time I had said nothing.
7. — every mouthful he took a drink of water.

8. The thought of separation — my brother made me sad.
9. What is the use — my staying any longer?
10. I was — the point of starting when I heard that he lay — the point of death.

EXERCISE CXL

Correct errors in the use of prepositions; give your reason for each correction: —

1. He jumped in his carriage and drove to the barricades.
2. The place bore a very different aspect now to that which we had noticed before.
3. What is the use of your saying that?
4. Shylock received no different treatment than was shown to every Jew in that day.
5. Between each five paces he looked at the telegram.
6. He lived at Washington for three months.
7. On these beliefs it had existed up till now.
8. The Senate is so constituted as to place the control of the country into the hands of these raw young commonwealths.
9. Among the collection is one remarkable photograph.
10. To no small proportion of these wayfarers, happiness was unattainable from the beginning.

Would-be Prepositions. — A few expressions that sometimes serve as prepositions are not accepted as such by the best usage.

I

II

She suspected that there was something behind Miss Panney's words.

There was the old man in the forest behind the barn.

She suspected that there was something *back of* Miss Panney's words.

There was the old man in the forest *back of* the barn.

Back of, which an English critical journal calls "a new preposition of American origin," is not in good use in the United States. "At the back of" is, of course, correct; for in this case "back" is a noun: *e.g.* "He remembers the time when there was something at the back of the looking-glass" (Mary E. Wilkins).

I

There will be no war within
six months.

II

There will be no war *inside of*
six months.

Inside of for "within" is sometimes heard in the United States and in the British colonies; but it is not in good use anywhere.

I

She flung herself on a chair.
Before the ship had been out
many days, she was wrecked and
blown on the rocks.

II

She flung herself *on to* a chair.
Before the ship had been out
many days, she was wrecked and
blown *onto* the rocks.

The use of *on to*, or *onto*, as a preposition has been defended on the ground that the expression bears a relation to "on" similar to that which "into" bears to "in," and that therefore the combination of "on" with "to" is needed to make the meaning definite; but in most cases either "on" or "to" would express the writer's meaning better than is done by *on to* or *onto*. It must be admitted, however, that, although this expression in neither form is yet recognized as standard English, it seems to be gaining ground and may in time get a foothold in the language.¹ There is, of course, no objection to the juxtaposition of the adverb "on" and the preposition "to": *e.g.* "On to Richmond!" was the cry."

Avoid prepositions that have not been admitted to good use.

EXERCISE CXLI

In place of each italicized expression, substitute one that is in good use as a preposition:—

1. There was no unkindness *back of* Anne's direct logic.
2. We came *on to* a bare level of old cultivated ground.
3. I think I have seen him *inside of* a year.
4. Fall down and worship! *On to* your knees with the rest of us!
5. She wondered, as she stepped back *on to* the veranda, if he would ride on to the next farm.

¹ See Dr. Fitzedward Hall's article in the "Nation," April 12, 1900.

Redundant Prepositions. — Redundancies in the use of prepositions spring from a variety of causes and occur in various forms.

I

He discusses with his priests what has happened.

One sin follows another.

Dunstan Cass, happening to pass his cottage, decided to ask admission.

The nation is awaiting [*or* waiting for¹] his recovery with hope.

Mental sedatives are craved by many men and women.

No one can help admiring Stella's bright disposition.

The mayor will not permit the usual children's entertainments on the Fourth of July.

He took out a little account-book and conned its pages.

In the sentences under II, the italicized prepositions add nothing to the meaning of the accompanying verbs.

I

This made me ponder certain other consequences.

He pondered the question.

"Ponder *on*" and "ponder *over*" are not absolutely incorrect; but *on* and *over* destroy the picturesqueness of "ponder" by shutting out its original meaning (to weigh), which is suggested in "His mother kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke ii. 19).

I

Darcy and Elizabeth met at Darcy's summer manor, near

II

He discusses with his priests *about* what has happened.

One sin follows *after* another.

Dunstan Cass, happening to pass *by* his cottage, decided to ask admission.

The nation is awaiting¹ with hope *for* his recovery.

Mental sedatives are craved *for* by many men and women.

No one can help *from* admiring Stella's bright disposition.

The mayor will not permit *of* the usual children's entertainments on the Fourth of July.

He took out a little account-book and conned *over* its pages.

II

This made me ponder *on* certain other consequences.

He pondered *over* the question.

II

Darcy and Elizabeth met at Darcy's summer manor, near *by*

¹ See page 212.

which Elizabeth was spending a short vacation. which Elizabeth was spending a short vacation.

“Near which” fully expresses the intended meaning.

I

I went to Chicago and thence to St. Louis.

II

I went to Chicago and *from* thence to St. Louis.

There is some authority, both old and new, for “*from* thence”; but since “thence” means “from there,” it is better to omit “from.” So, too, “whence” is better than “*from* whence.”

I

With righteous indignation, he shakes the dust off his feet.

II

With righteous indignation, he shakes the dust off *of* his feet.

Keep off the grass.

Keep off *of* the grass.

Since “off” is here a preposition, *of* is redundant.

I

I will go with the greatest pleasure.

II

I will go with the greatest *of* pleasure.

Of here interferes with the grammatical construction, for “greatest” is an adjective qualifying “pleasure.”

I

Next morning the insurgent army began to move.

II

On next morning the insurgent army began to move.

One day Mr. Jones shot some pheasants.

On one day Mr. Jones shot some pheasants.

We properly say “on the tenth of December,” “on the first day of the week,” “on Thursday”; but *on* before “next morning” or “one day” is not in good use.

I

Those on whom the responsibility of governing our new dominions falls are the executive first, and then Congress.

II

Those on whom the responsibility of governing our new dominions falls are the executive first, and then *on* Congress.

He spoke on a subject from [*or* out of] which he succeeded in getting much.

He spoke on a subject from which he succeeded in getting much *out of*.

The author of neither of the sentences under II seems to have been able to remember the beginning of a rather short sentence till he reached the end.

Avoid as a hindrance any preposition that is not a help to the sense or to the construction.

EXERCISE CXLII

Strike out any redundant prepositions : —

1. He met a boy of about eighteen years old.
2. Cadmus stood pondering upon what he should do.
3. Whence we came from we do not know.
4. No one can help from loving her.
5. A workman fell off of the ladder.
6. On one day I caught five trout, on another day twelve.
7. We must examine into this subject more carefully.
8. The bridge shook as we crossed over it.
9. The spring is near to the house.
10. Bruno followed after his master.
11. I accept your invitation with the greatest of pleasure.
12. He felt that he was justified in taking, with a clear conscience, the repose for which he craved.
13. There is a disposition to-day to dispute the claim put forward on yesterday.
14. Excuse me from accepting of your bounty.
15. Hawthorne's humor irradiates through the story.
16. The time was not to exceed over fifteen minutes.
17. When he returned, he entered into the printing business.

Omitted Prepositions. — A preposition necessary to the sense, or to the construction, or to both is sometimes omitted.

I

The Boers protest against confiscation.

II

The Boers protest confiscation.

The Boers might protest their loyalty to Krüger or their willingness to comply with the demands of Great Britain, — that is, make a solemn declaration of loyalty or

of willingness; but they protest "against" confiscation,—that is, declare opposition to it.

I

The doctor wanted to be at home for the Thanksgiving dinner.

II

The doctor wanted to be home for the Thanksgiving dinner.

Before "home" the preposition "at" should never be omitted; but the preposition "to" is always omitted unless some word intervenes between "to" and "home": *e.g.* "I am at home on Tuesdays," "I am going home," "I am going to my old home."

I

This must have happened in some other place [*or* elsewhere].

II

This must have happened some other place.

Without the preposition, the phrase "some other place" is slovenly as well as incorrect. "In" is needed to make the expression the grammatical equivalent of "elsewhere."¹

I

She runs as fast as she can, but it's of no use [*or* useless].

II

She runs as fast as she can, but it's no use.

The expression "it's no use," though frequent in conversation, should be avoided in serious writing. To give the phrase "no use" the force of an adjective equivalent to "useless," "of" is required by the rules of grammar.

I

There is no use in saying anything to him.

II

There is no use saying anything to him.

In this example, "use" is the real subject of "is." "In" is needed in order to connect "saying" with the first part of the sentence.²

¹ See page 257.

² See page 312.

I

Another brief pause was filled by the draining of their cups, and the mustering of breath to join in a shout.

The building of the church had been made an excuse for the continued refusal of the license.

“Of” is needed after “mustering” and “building”; for the presence of “the” before these words shows that the noun element in them is so prominent as to keep them from taking direct objects.¹

I

Is it a matter of truth or of fiction?

“Truth” and “fiction” are not different names for the same thing; they are two things, a fact which the repetition of the preposition makes clear at once.

I

My judgment is based not so much on what a person says as on the way in which he says it [*or* on his manner of saying it].

He was fully alive to the advantages of foreign methods, as well as to the necessity of using them.

Prepositions are needed before “the way” and “the necessity,” in order to make the construction of these phrases clear.

I

She attacked Fred like a wild-cat for not writing to you.

The “World” telegraphed to its representative at Key West.

II

Another brief pause was filled by the draining of their cups, and the mustering of breath to join in a shout.

The building the church had been made an excuse for the continued refusal of the license.

II

Is it a matter of truth or fiction?

“Truth” and “fiction” are not different names for the same thing; they are two things, a fact which the repetition of the preposition makes clear at once.

II

My judgment is based not so much on what a person says as the way in which he says it.

He was fully alive to the advantages of foreign methods, as well as the necessity of using them.

Prepositions are needed before “the way” and “the necessity,” in order to make the construction of these phrases clear.

II

She attacked Fred like a wild-cat for not writing you.

The “World” telegraphed its representative at Key West.

¹See pages 247-248.

The omission of "to" in sentences like those under II is stigmatized by the "Spectator" as "an excruciating commercialism." This expression may be too harsh, but it probably points to the origin of the practice.

I

Some friends gave him to me.

II

Some friends gave him me.

Though "to" may properly be omitted before the indirect object of "give" when that object comes immediately after the verb, it should not be omitted when the indirect object follows the direct. Thus we say, "Give me liberty or give me death," "Some friends gave him to me."

In formal writing, do not omit a preposition that is needed to make the meaning clear or the sentence grammatical.

EXERCISE CXLIII

Supply any prepositions needed to make the meaning clear or the grammatical construction correct:—

1. If you are for peace with honor, write your member of Congress.
2. He had been home a couple of hours.
3. It was no use to think of Mrs. Simmonds.
4. Governor Morton had telegraphed the secretary of war.
5. Modern science points to no name with greater pride than that of the Herschels.
6. Before you go, please pick up that book and give it me.
7. A more careful guarding the prisoners would have prevented this accident.
8. He fled the country, and went to England or France.
9. Ignorance is the mother of fear as well as admiration.
10. This side the mountain the country is thickly settled; the other side there are few inhabitants.
11. Wealth is more conducive to worldliness than piety.
12. There is no use denying that the insurance rate is too high.
13. Some publishers protest the new postal order.
14. She's looking out the window.

CHAPTER X

CONJUNCTIONS

Vulgarisms.—Some blunders in the use of conjunctions are, or should be, confined to the illiterate.

I

I do not know that Sterne can be called a novelist.

“Will Mr. Care be in town to-morrow?”

“Not that I know.”

II

I do not know *as* Sterne can be called a novelist.

“Will Mr. Care be in town to-morrow?”

“Not *as* I know.”

“I do not know *as*,” “Not *as* I know,” are among the vulgarisms that were once good English. In all such expressions, “that” long ago took the place of *as*.

I

He shouted as men shout in the tumult of a riot.

II

He shouted *like* men shout in the tumult of a riot.

The use of *like* for “as” (which comes, perhaps, from the ancient form “like as,” — *e.g.* “Like as a father pitieth his children,”¹ — a form that still survives, it is said, in some parts of this country) is not uncommon in England and in the southern and western parts of the United States, and is sometimes heard in New England; but it has no support in the practice of the best speakers and writers. *Like* should never be used to introduce a subordinate clause when the verb of that clause is expressed. When, however, the verb is omitted and the clause is thus reduced to a substantive or a substantive phrase, “like” is correct: *e.g.* “She sings like a bird,” “He talks like the rest of the family.”

¹ Psalms ciii. 13.

I

The tops of Alsup's shoes drooped over as if they had been leather strings.

Like for "as if" is a shade worse than *like* for "as."

II

The tops of Alsup's shoes drooped over *like* they had been leather strings.

I

I am not so romantic but that I [or as not to] know the difference between diamonds and garnets.

II

I am not so romantic but *what* I know the difference between diamonds and garnets.

"But *what*" for "but that" was once in good use, but is now a mark of illiteracy.

I

They were forbidden to alter the coats unless express permission were given.

II

They were forbidden to alter the coats *without* express permission were given.

Without in the sense of "unless" was also once in good use, but is now a vulgarism. No longer properly a conjunction, "without" is correctly used as a preposition ("I cannot change my coat without your permission"), or as an adverb ("Did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?" — Luke xi. 40).

Avoid vulgarisms in the use of conjunctions.

EXERCISE CXLIV

In place of any vulgarisms, substitute expressions that are in reputable use:—

1. Music Hall looked like Harvard men had built it.
2. I do not know as anybody can tell how the property was left.
3. Every lady cherishes her china like a bookworm does his books.
4. He was never easy without he was pouring his medicine into his patients.
5. Who knows but what I might be found in Gloucester Square?
6. I don't see as she is any more likely to die than I am.
7. Not but what we have very good shops in Salisbury.
8. I'm not clever like some people are.

Misused Conjunctions. — Many errors in the use of conjunctions spring, in part at least, from obscurity or confusion of thought. "A close reasoner and a good writer in general," says Coleridge, "may be known by his pertinent use of connectives."

I

Sometimes these knights are assaulting or defending a castle.

II

Sometimes these knights are assaulting *and* defending a castle.

It is not probable that "these knights" are at the same time "assaulting *and* defending" a castle. Properly used, "and" adds something to the thought, "or" presents an alternative.

I

Dr. Primrose had married an estimable lady, pure and good, and thrifty and strong [*or* pure and good, thrifty and strong].

II

Dr. Primrose had married an estimable lady, pure and good, *but* thrifty and strong.

The conjunction "but," which is akin in meaning to "however," "nevertheless," "yet," "on the other hand," always introduces something in the nature of a contrast, an exception, a limitation, or an objection to what has gone before. In this example, an addition to the thought, not a contrast, is intended.

I

Bulgaria has been coveted by Russia because her road to the Mediterranean lies through it, and by Turkey because it separates her European territory from that of the czar.

II

Bulgaria has been coveted by Russia *as* her road to the Mediterranean lies through it, and by Turkey *as* it separates her European territory from that of the czar.

That we need a new station is denied by no one; for our immense five-story station ¹ has long since outgrown its usefulness.

That we need a new station is denied by no one, *as* our immense five-story depot ¹ has long ago outgrown its usefulness.

Since, then, there is no antithesis between substance and form, the sentence is effective.

As, then, there is no antithesis between substance and form, the sentence is effective.

¹ See page 12.

In each of the sentences under consideration, *as* introduces very vaguely a reason for the assertion made in the principal clause of the sentence. In each case, a more specific conjunction is preferable: in the first sentence, this conjunction is "because," which expresses in the strongest way the relation of cause to effect; in the second sentence, it is "for," which makes the causal clause more important in itself than as a reason for the main proposition; in the third, it is "since," which throws the emphasis, not on the reason, but on the assertion for which a reason is given—on the effect rather than on the cause. Since "as" has so many meanings, a writer should, when he can, use a conjunction that covers less ground and is, therefore, more definite.

"As" often serves, however, to introduce a causal clause when that clause is of equal importance with the main proposition, and when the idea of giving a reason is very weak: *e.g.* "As the population of Scotland had been generally trained to arms, under the act of security, they were not indifferently prepared for war" (Scott). In such a sentence, "as" is in meaning almost the same as "for," but it differs from "for" in one respect: a clause introduced by "as" may either precede or follow the principal clause, whereas a clause beginning with "for" must follow it—*e.g.* "The population of Scotland were not indifferently prepared for war, for they had been generally trained to arms under the act of security."

I

I set "The Ancient Mariner"
above all these poems, in melody,
imagination, weirdness, sweet-
ness, and completeness.

II

I set "The Ancient Mariner"
above all these poems, *both* in
melody, imagination, weirdness,
sweetness, and completeness.

"Both" as a correlative of "and" was formerly used to refer to more than two persons or things; but according to the best modern usage it refers to two only, or to two groups only. For example:—

It was impossible that both Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn could have been lawfully married to Henry the Eighth. — MACAULAY.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see. — STEVENSON.

I

The doctor said that it was necessary for him to send her to London.

They lament that the brewers are getting control of the city.

II

The doctor told *how* it was necessary for him to send her to London.

They lament *how* the brewers are getting control of the city.

Although the use of *how* as an equivalent of "that" after verbs of saying, thinking, perceiving, and the like is not without authority, it is avoided by careful writers. "How," which in its full signification means in what way or manner, is correctly used in the following lines: —

You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd. — SHAKSPERE.¹

I'll tell you how the sun rose, —
A ribbon at a time. — EMILY DICKINSON.

I

Though the world has advanced in other respects, the problem of comfortable travelling by night is still unsolved.

II

If the world has advanced in other respects, the problem of comfortable travelling by night is still unsolved.

In this example, *if* is not incorrect;² but "though," which means in spite of the fact that, notwithstanding that, is preferable, for it gives exact expression to the writer's thought.

In a sentence like "He asked me if I thought it would rain," some persons prefer "whether" to "if"; but either "if" or "whether" may be used to introduce an objective clause depending on the verb "ask," "doubt," "know," "learn," "see," "think," or the like. The difference in

¹ The Merchant of Venice, iv. 1.

² See page 196.

meaning is slight: "whether," by suggesting two sides of a question, presents an alternative; "if" presents but one side. Thus, if we say either "See whether it rains or not" or "See whether it rains," we suggest two ideas — rain and not rain; if we say "See if it rains," we suggest one idea only, — rain, — but the opposite idea is, of course, not far off.

I

Then neither the judge nor
the public would ever be in the
fog.

II

Then neither the judge *or* the
public would ever be in the
fog.

"Nor" is the proper correlative of "neither." The following sentence in a recent book,¹ "Neither Bonaparte nor his officers knew, or could know, the facts as we know them to-day," was objected to by the proof-reader on the ground that "or" before "could know" should be *nor*. "Or" is evidently the proper word, however; for "neither" goes, not with "knew," but with "Bonaparte," and has its correlative in "nor" before "his officers." If the correlative of "or" were expressed, it would be "either," and would be placed before "knew"; the sentence would then read, "Neither Bonaparte nor his officers either knew, or could know, the facts as we know them to-day." The only objection to a sentence so framed is that it would be clumsy.

I

He had no time or inclination
[*or* neither time nor inclination]
to do the work required of him.

This is not right or just.

She was not quite so old or so
stiff as he.

The best writers for children
never use a condescending tone,
or the tone which just escapes
being condescending.

II

He had no time *nor* inclination
to do the work required of
him.

This is not right *nor* just.

She was not quite so old *nor*
stiff as he.

The best writers for children
never use a condescending tone,
nor the tone which just escapes
being condescending.

¹ Herbert H. Sargent's "Campaign of Marengo."

In the sixteenth or the seventeenth century, there would have been no question about the correctness of *nor* in such sentences as those under II.¹ To-day, authorities are to some extent divided; but the tendency of the best usage is toward "or" when the preceding negative affects equally the two expressions connected by "or," as it always does when the two expressions are in the same clause.

I

II

I have in no way offered you any encouragement, nor have I had any conversation with you.

I have in no way offered you any encouragement, *or* have I had any conversation with you.

When, as in this example, the two expressions connected by the conjunction in question are full clauses, "nor," not *or*, is correct; for the force of the negative in the first clause does not go over to the second clause. Had the sentence read "I have not offered you any encouragement or had any conversation with you," "or" would have been correct.

I

II

In the days of my youth there was no such game as lawn-tennis, or golf, or basket-ball [*or* there were no such games as lawn-tennis, golf, and basket-ball].

In the days of my youth there were no such games as lawn-tennis, *nor* golf, *nor* basket-ball.

"No" modifies "games" (or "game"), and is the only negative required in the sentence. If a disjunctive conjunction is used in the last part of the sentence, it should be "or"; but since "or" would imply that each game is thought of by itself, "game," not "games," would be proper in the first part. The real meaning of the sentence is, however, best expressed in the second form under I, "In the days of my youth there were no such games as lawn-tennis, golf, and basket-ball."

¹ See also page 301.

I

Mrs. Krüger lived a life of seclusion after Oom Paul left the Transvaal.

II

Mrs. Krüger lived a life of seclusion *since* Oom Paul left the Transvaal.

The distinction already noted between “after” and “since” as prepositions¹ holds between them as conjunctions: “after” refers to a certain point, or period, of time; “since” covers the intervening time as well.

I

Scarcely had the smoke of the great fire passed away when [*or* No sooner had the smoke of the great fire passed away than] the reconstruction of the “Eternal City” began.

II

Scarcely had the smoke of the great conflagration passed away *than* the reconstruction of the “Eternal City” began.

Than cannot properly go with “scarcely”; for “than” implies comparison, and therefore requires an adverb or an adjective of comparison before it.

I

The plot, which is unique, is carefully executed.

II

The plot, *though* unique, is carefully executed.

Though manifestly does not express the writer’s meaning, as we see if we substitute for *though* an equivalent expression, such as “notwithstanding that it is,” “in spite of the fact that it is.”

I

We may tell our hostess that we have had a delightful evening, though we have all the time wished ourselves at home.

II

We may tell our hostess that we have had a delightful evening, *when* we have all the time wished ourselves at home.

In this example, *when*, at the time that, vaguely suggests the writer’s meaning; “though” expresses it more exactly, for “though” signifies that, notwithstanding the fact that we have wished ourselves at home, we tell our hostess

¹ See page 313.

that we have enjoyed the evening, — that is, we tell a conventional lie.

I

While hunting for a subject in Hazlitt, I kept finding marks in the margin.

II

When hunting for a subject in Hazlitt, I kept finding marks in the margin.

In this example, “while” is preferable to *when*; for “while” means during the time that, “when” at the time that. Both of the following sentences are correct: “While [that is, during the time that] I was hunting, I found marks in the book”; “When [that is, at the time that] I came to the subject I was hunting for, I found marks in the book.”

“When” may, however, refer, not to a point of time, but to a period: *e.g.* “When Nero was emperor, there was a persecution of the Christians which lasted several years.” “When” here means at some time during Nero’s reign; if “while” had been used, it might have been supposed to mean throughout Nero’s reign. “When” fixes attention on a date or a period, “while” on the duration of time.

I

He was seated on the sidewalk, and beside him was a pair of crutches.

II

He was seated on the sidewalk, *while* beside him was a pair of crutches.

The author of this sentence did not mean to say that he was seated on the sidewalk during the time that his crutches were beside him; he meant to mention two independent facts.

It would be going too far to say that “while” should never be used except in the sense of during the time that; for it often means at the same time that (as, “While I am in love with her character, I am also in love with her face”), or as long as (“While there is life there is hope”). There is, however, no doubt that “while” is often used when some other conjunction would express the meaning more exactly.

I

Though she thinks I'm a pretty good companion, she is sure I'm a poor sort of man.

II

While she thinks I'm a pretty good companion, she is sure I'm a poor sort of a¹ man.

The author of this sentence meant to contrast the fact that he is thought to be a pretty good companion with the fact that he is known to be a poor sort of man. This contrast is not so well expressed by *while* as by "though."

I

To make a large body of men sing together is a laborious task; but to [*or* task; to] make an orchestra play together is even more difficult.

II

To make a large body of men sing together is a laborious task, *while* to make an orchestra play together is even more difficult.

In this example, if any connective is used, "but" is better than *while*; for the writer meant to contrast the difficulty of making men sing together with that of making them play together. "But" expresses a contrast very strongly, "though" less strongly, "while" very weakly if at all.

Use the conjunction that expresses your meaning exactly.

EXERCISE CXLV

Insert in each blank the proper conjunction;² give the reason for your choice:—

And, but

1. I can go, — I would rather not.
2. I can go, — I will go.
3. Glen Centre was not much of a village, — it was in a very pretty part of the country.

¹ See page 246.

² In some cases one conjunction or another may be used, according to the meaning intended.

As, because, for, since

1. Their will must be obeyed, not — it is lawful and reasonable, but — it is their will.
2. — no one is to be benefited by such a course, why follow it?
3. — they were without provisions, they had to break camp.
4. This is no party question; — it touches us, not as Republicans or as Democrats, but as citizens.
5. We wonder — we are ignorant, and we fear — we are weak.

How, that

1. I recollect wondering — the audience could sit so calmly.
2. Shakspeare has taught us — great men should speak and act.
3. Bob Cratchit told them — he had a place in view for Master Peter.

Or, nor

1. Neither my tastes — my talents lie in this direction.
2. His character has never been misunderstood — criticized by any one.
3. She indulged in no regrets — speculations.
4. I have no money, — have I any friends in the city.
5. When I was a boy there was no such thing as a bicycle — an automobile.
6. Huxley still declared himself unable to give his assent to a single doctrine of Positivism, — to agree with Mr. Harrison.

Since, after

1. I have been in such a quandary — I saw you last !
2. This happened — the Revolution was over.
3. We had no food — we left Rome.

Though, but, while, and

1. The six young officers, — gentlemen at heart, were very young.
2. I trusted him — he had twice deceived me.
3. The prince never drives, — the princess is a splendid whip.
4. I felt a lump in my throat, — I didn't want to cry yet, — I thought my position a sad one.
5. — I like pears, I also like peaches.
6. I said I was glad to see her, — I was wishing she hadn't come.
7. I was now up to my waist in the bog, —, — it was summer, I was shivering with cold.

When, while

1. Each person took his turn in watching — the others slept.
2. — the car stops, I shall get off.
3. Do not leave the car — it is in motion.

EXERCISE CXLVI

Fill each blank with an appropriate conjunction : —

A BLUE-STOCKING IN THE KITCHEN

I don't know why it was — so many of our servants were either poets — novelists. This particular blue-stocking had a passion (I cannot call it a gift) for writing romantic novels, — perhaps I should say, a romantic novel, — I do not think — she wrote more — one. Her name was Euphemia; at least, she said — it was, — the village people who had known her all her life said — it was Martha. It would have been a bolder child — I, — I was no coward, who would have called her Martha at close range; — she had a terrible temper. I preferred to wear the white badge of peace rather — the red badge of courage. She loved a fight, — seized any excuse for one. — her skin looked — — it were tough, she was the most sensitive of women. — you said, "It's a pleasant day, Euphemia," she was offended; — by mentioning that fact you assumed — she was not aware of it. —, on the other hand, you failed to make some such pleasant remark — you met her, that, alas, was cause for offence; — it proved — you were too proud to speak to her. You can readily see —, with a woman like Euphemia in the kitchen, we walked on eggs.

EXERCISE CXLVII

Correct errors, or make desirable changes, in the use of conjunctions; give your reason for each change : —

1. He became jealous, as the baby had not been named for him.
2. The weather was still bitterly cold, though he was well protected from it.
3. He would not choose the silver, which was not very rich nor not very mean.

4. While the government needs friends, it does not need them enough to inconvenience anybody else.

5. The spirit told how Comus was the son of Circe, and how his mother loved to keep a herd of swine about her.

6. The story has no hero nor heroine.

7. He saw the boats preparing, because in that season the people leave that island.

8. Lacy is a little fellow, while I am moderately large.

9. If I am poor, I am honest.

10. Scarcely had the boat left the wharf than the shaft broke.

11. He admired both Chaucer and Shakspeare and Milton.

12. She said she was well, when she had a raging toothache which had kept her awake all night.

Would-be Conjunctions. — A few adverbs are sometimes used as if they were conjunctions.

I

As soon as [*or* The moment that] she saw his face, she knew that there was no hope.

After [*or* When] this was done, there was no turning back.

II

Directly she saw his face, she knew that there was no hope.

Once this was done, there was no turning back.

Directly, *once*, and a few similar adverbs are sometimes treated as conjunctions. This use of *directly* is more common in England than in America, but it has not yet established itself in the language.

Avoid conjunctions that have not been admitted to good use.

EXERCISE CXLVIII

Insert in each blank the proper expression, “*directly*,” “*once*,” or “*as soon as*” : —

1. It should be done —.

2. — I was blind, but now I can see.

3. Iodine and phosphorus combine — they come into contact.

4. He put up his hand to protect his head — Smithers moved.

Redundant Conjunctions. — Errors caused by the insertion of unnecessary conjunctions are of frequent occurrence.

I

His arrival was a relief to an anxious family, who were beginning to be alarmed.

Permit me to thank you for your letter, which I received last night.

He spoke in a deep and low tone, which nevertheless was heard at both ends of the hall.

Discipline is needed to fit us for life after our graduation, when we shall have no masters.

II

His arrival was a relief to an anxious family, *and* who were beginning to be alarmed.

Permit me to thank you for your letter *and* which I received last night.

He spoke in a deep and low tone, *but* which nevertheless was heard at both ends of the hall.

Discipline is needed to fit us for life after our graduation *and* when we shall have no masters.

Since the relative pronouns "who" and "which" and the relative adverb "when" are in themselves connectives, *and* and *but* are unnecessary; they are, moreover, felt as obstructions to the flow of language. When, however, a conjunction connects relative clauses of the same kind, it serves a useful purpose: *e.g.* "His arrival was a relief to his family, who were very fond of him, and who were beginning to be alarmed."

I

Mr. McStinger and Mr. Beed agree on that point.

II

Both Mr. McStinger and Mr. Beed agree on that point.

In this example, the presence of "agree" makes *both* redundant. Had "believe" been used instead of "agree," "both" would have been correct; for men believe separately.

I

I do not doubt that you are surprised.

II

I do not doubt *but* that you are surprised.

After verbs like "doubt," "deny," "despair," "question," used negatively or interrogatively, "that" is preferable to "*but* that."

I

Although we thoroughly hate Shylock, we cannot help pitying him.

II

Although we thoroughly hate Shylock, we cannot *but* help pitying him.

The writer might properly have said either "we cannot but pity him"¹ or "we cannot help pitying him."

I

The people of the town had heard that the Prussians had been beaten.

II

The people of the town had heard *how* that the Prussians had been beaten.

The compound *how that* occurs more than once in the King James version of the Bible;² but it is not in present use.

Avoid as a hindrance any conjunction that is not a help to the sense or to the construction.

EXERCISE CXLIX

Strike out any redundant conjunctions:—

1. Sharp words had ensued from Joan, and who had offered to leave at once.
2. I do not deny but that it is a difficult operation.
3. I have obtained the assistance of Dr. Jones, a teacher of great experience, and whose ideas are quite in harmony with my own.
4. I cannot but help feeling insulted.
5. I will tell you after the meeting and when we are going home.
6. Both Webster and Worcester agree on this point.
7. Crossjay related how that he had stood to salute.
8. They could only guess as to what lay before them.

Omitted Conjunctions.— Sometimes the omission of a conjunction makes a sentence obscure, sometimes clumsy.

I

I heard that Mr. Blank cast reflections on the committee; but I was sure he was not the offender.

II

I heard Mr. Blank cast reflections on the committee; but I was sure he was not the offender.

¹ See pages 302–303.

² See, for example, 2 Corinthians viii. 2, xiii. 5; Jude 5.

Since the verb "cast" has the same form for the infinitive as for the preterite indicative, the absence of "that" after "heard" leaves the first part of the sentence under II open to two interpretations. The omission of "that" after "sure" exemplifies a practice which is so frequent in conversation and is used by so many careful writers that it cannot be condemned. Considerations of euphony often determine whether "that" should or should not be put in.

I

Then hearts beat as warmly
as now, hate was fiercer and love
stronger.

II

Then hearts beat as warmly,
hate was more fierce and love
more strong than now.

In the absence of "as" after "warmly," the sentence under II reads "as warmly . . . *than*"; but to insert the second "as" would be to give undue emphasis to the unimportant words "as" and "*than*." The form under I avoids both faults; it leaves the comparisons at the end of the sentence incomplete, to be sure, but there is no danger that they will be completed incorrectly.

In formal writing, do not omit a conjunction that is needed to make the meaning clear or the sentence grammatical.

EXERCISE CL

Supply any conjunctions needed to make the meaning clear or the grammatical construction correct; change the order of words if necessary:—

1. Say to Mr. Blank as soon as he comes in I wish to speak to him.
2. Jack is as tall if not taller than his older brother.
3. She is prettier but not so interesting as Grace.
4. He reported Colonel Hack was not in his room.
5. I never heard any one talk more easily or so charmingly as he.
6. We trust that Chicago explorer who has discovered a new species of elephant is not a relative of Baron Münchhausen.
7. Tell father John is coming up the road, but the cows are not with him.

PART II

ESSENTIALS OF COMPOSITION

BOOK I—ELEMENTS OF EXPRESSION

CHAPTER I

PARAGRAPHS

I. WHAT A PARAGRAPH IS

PARAGRAPHS play so important a part in all kinds of prose composition that a young writer cannot too soon learn what they are and how to shape them.

Tom rowed with untired vigor, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

"Park House stands high up out of the flood," said Maggie. "Perhaps they have got Lucy there."

This passage from George Eliot's "Mill on the Floss" consists of two distinct parts, each of which constitutes a paragraph. A paragraph may in general terms be defined as a group of written or printed words set off from other groups so as to make a break in the page. The usual way of marking this break is, in printers' language, to "indent" the first line of each paragraph, — that is, to begin the line a little farther from the edge of the page than the succeeding lines, — and to leave a blank space, when possible, after the last word of the paragraph.

Division by paragraphs might seem at first sight to be merely a mechanical device for breaking the monotony of the page; but if the division is properly made it serves a higher purpose. In a composition of any length, the writer's thoughts group themselves round central thoughts, each of which is a subdivision of his main

subject. Whether he has these subdivisions in mind at the outset or gives them shape as he writes, he will, if he has a well-ordered mind and knows how to express himself, break his manuscript into paragraphs that correspond to the divisions of his thought. The late Edward Rowland Sill does this in the following essay : —

HUMAN NATURE IN CHICKENS

I am convinced that one important way to acquire a profound knowledge of human nature is to study it in chickens. The difference between the mental characteristics of the two sexes, for example : the hen is very peaceable, chanticleer very irascible ; the hen is an industrious scratcher, while chanticleer is naturally an idler, and thinks that if he crows and fights, that is enough ; the hen takes care of the chicks all day, chanticleer only occasionally giving them a bug, and oftener a dig ; the hen takes care of them all night also, chanticleer elbowing them off the perch to get the best place for himself ; the hen, having seized another hen about the head, never lets go till the feathers come out, and never stops fighting till nearly dead, while chanticleer fights only for glory, and gives up long before he is hurt much ; when they are fed, the hen attends strictly to business and gets all she can, while chanticleer will pick up a morsel, and wave it up and down with frantic eagerness to be seen of the hen, and values the flattery of having her take it from him more than the food.

These, so far, are well-known observations ; but I wish to put on record one that is perhaps new, and, if new, important to the scientific world. It has been commonly supposed by evolutionists that the development of altruism and the benevolent sentiments in the lower animals reaches no farther than to the parental and sex points of view. But I have seen one of my roosters call his fellow and feed a bug to him. It may have been a bug that he did not specially want, himself, but this would only be a counterpart of much of our higher human benevolence. Does not most of our charity consist in giving away something for which we have no earthly use ourselves ? (By the way, I have known this altruistic rooster to crow with great pride and pleasure when the object of his alms-giving had humbly swallowed the scratchy morsel.) I have seen a mother hen, also, when another brood of little chicks had got mixed up with her own for the moment, making a great pretense of pecking the aliens on the head, to teach

them the difference between families in this world, but taking great pains not to hurt the fluffy little strangers. Furthermore, I have noticed that certain other hens, not mothers (but whether any who have never been mothers I have not yet observed), will peck all little chicks with self-restraint, giving them as much salutary discipline as possible without bodily harm.

It may be said that these phenomena occur only among domestic animals, who have caught some morals and manners from their betters by contagion. But I think this is a subtlety, and that we may as well admit that the development of the moral sentiments begins farther back than we have been inclined to put it.

The first of these three paragraphs contains some "well-known observations" concerning certain points of resemblance between human beings and chickens; the second contains an observation that the author deems new and important; the third draws the inference that "the development of the moral sentiments begins farther back than we have been inclined to put it."

A writer who has a well-ordered mind and knows how to express himself will not be content with breaking his manuscript into paragraphs that correspond to the divisions of his thought, but will make each paragraph a well-rounded whole, a unit. For example : —

There were, by-the-bye, in my last article a few omissions made, of no great consequence in themselves; the longest, I think, a paragraph of twelve or fourteen lines. I should scarcely have thought this worth mentioning, as it certainly by no means exceeds the limits of that editorial prerogative which I most willingly recognize, but that the omissions seemed to me, and to one or two persons who had seen the article in its original state, to be made on a principle which, however sound in itself, does not, I think, apply to compositions of this description. The passages omitted were the most pointed and ornamented sentences in the review. Now, for high and grave works, a history, for example, or a system of political or moral philosophy, Dr. Johnson's rule — that every sentence which the writer thinks fine ought to be cut out — is excellent. But periodical works like ours, which, unless they strike at the first reading are not likely to strike at all, whose whole life is a month or two, may, I think, be allowed to be sometimes

even viciously florid. Probably, in estimating the real value of any tinsel which I may put upon my articles, you and I should not materially differ. But it is not by his own taste, but by the taste of the fish, that the angler is determined in his choice of bait. — MACAULAY.

In this paragraph, which is taken from a letter to the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," Macaulay clearly indicates his subject at the beginning, develops it in orderly fashion as he goes on, and ends with a striking figure of speech that sums up his argument.

One way of showing what a paragraph is, is to show what it is not : —

A

Mr Darcy was invited by Mr Bingley to make him a visit at his place.

It happened that, early one morning, Elizabeth Bennet had taken a walk, and on her way had visited the Bingleys.

Here she met Mr Darcy, and at first sight took a dislike to him.

She took cold on account of her walk and was not able to go home for two days; so her sister came and took care of her.

The sister of Bingley wanted to marry Mr Darcy on account of his money, although she could not consider herself poor.

It seems that Mr Darcy was struck at the first sight by the handsome face of Elizabeth and Mr Bingley also was not slow to acknowledge that he liked Jane, Elizabeth's sister.

Soon after the malady was cured, the sisters returned home.

In a few days Mr Bennet invited Mr Darcy and Bingley to a dinner.

Here also Mr Darcy showed a desire for Elizabeth's company.

At this time there was quartered at Longbourn a regiment.

This was a very pleasing addition to the pleasures of the Bennets, for there was always some entertainment going on, in which they generally took part.

A Mr Wickham made his appearance here in order to join the regiment.

He was very handsome, and could keep up a lively conversation so that he was liked by everyone, especially the Bennets.

One day Mr Darcy with Mr Bingley were riding through Longbourn when they met the Bennets who were with Mr Wickham. As soon as Wickham saw Darcy he turned colour and passed on. Elizabeth noticed this and related it to her sister and they two had a great amount of gossip over the event.

The next time Elizabeth met Wickham she enquired of him when he and Mr Darcy had met before.

He told her a story that threw a dark light on Mr Darcy and made himself out as a very wronged man.

This was believed by all who heard of it untill Wickham eloped with Lydia Bennet leaving great many debts behind him.

These Mr Darcy paid and found out where the eloped couple were staying, and reported his find to Mr Bennet's brother.

This transaction was found out by Elizabeth, who immediately had to admit to her sister that she liked Mr Darcy more than ever.

This soon grew into love which finally resulted in her marriage.¹

B

The oriental method of administering justice, in days gone by, is neatly travestied in a little story of which I have recently seen several versions. As a burglar was trying to break into the house of a citizen of Cairo, the frame-work of the second-story window to which he clung, gave way and he fell to the street, breaking a leg. Limping before the Cadi, he indignantly demanded that the owner of the house be punished. "You shall have justice," said the judge. The owner being summoned claimed that the accident was due to the poor wood-work and that the carpenter not he was to blame. "That sounds reasonable," said the Cadi, "let the carpenter be called." The carpenter admitted that the window was defective "but how could I do any better," said he, "when the mason-work was out of plumb?" "To be sure," replied the judge and he sent for the mason. The mason could not deny that the coping was crooked. He explained that while he was placing it in position his attention was distracted from his work by a pretty girl, in a blue tunic, who passed on the other side of the street. "Then you are blameless," said the Cadi, and the girl was sent for. "I admit," said she, "that I am pretty, but that's not my fault; and if my blue tunic attracted the mason's attention, the dyer, not I, is responsible." "That's good logic," said the judge, "let the dyer be called." The dyer came and pleaded guilty. "Take the wretch," said the Cadi, to the thief, "and hang him from his own door-post." The people applauded this wise sentence and hurried off to carry it out. Soon they returned and re-

¹ This composition, which was written in the examination room by a candidate for admission to Harvard College, is copied verbatim from a paper by Professor L. B. R. Briggs, in the "Academy" (Syracuse), September, 1888.

ported that the dyer was too tall to be hung from his door-post. "Find a short dyer and hang him instead," said the Cadi, with a yawn; "let justice be done though the heavens fall."¹

The paper marked "A" is an extreme instance of the not uncommon fault of treating sentences as if they were paragraphs. It is also an extreme instance of the practice of writing as if a sentence might as well stand in one place as in another. The lack of method throughout is so great that, in order to show where paragraphs should have been made, it would be necessary to recast the paper.

The paper marked "B," on the other hand, is not a mere collection of sentences; it is a real composition, an interesting story well told, but it loses much by being put into a single paragraph. A great deal of it is dialogue; and clearness requires that, in a dialogue, each speech of each speaker shall form a separate paragraph. In the absence of this means of rapidly connecting speech with speaker, a reader is obliged to do for himself what the writer should have done for him.

I

Blankborough is a small country village of Massachusetts, about thirty miles from Boston. It is little more than a collection of scattered wooden houses, owned by typical New England farmers; but, having a truly American idea of its own importance, it has selectmen, coroners, and notary publics enough for a town three times its size.

In the middle of the village, on a little rise of land, stands a brick town-hall, almost large enough to contain all the citizens' houses together. Opposite this enormous structure rises a

II

Blankborough is a little country village of Massachusetts, about thirty miles from Boston. It is little more than a collection of scattered wooden houses, owned by typical New England farmers; but having a truly American idea of its own importance it provides selectmen, coroners, and notary publics enough for a town three times its size. A brick town-hall, almost large enough to contain all the citizens' houses, stands on a little rise of land in the middle of the village, and is fronted by a large soldiers' monument on which

¹ This composition was written by a student in Harvard College.

large soldiers' monument, on which are six names and a long dedication. Near by stands the inevitable "meeting-house," with its white steeple towering proudly over a modest little Episcopal church by its side.¹

are six names and a long dedication. Near by stands the inevitable "meeting-house," the white steeple of which towers proudly over a modest little Episcopal church by its side.¹

The general description of Blankborough properly forms one paragraph; the detailed account of the buildings in the village, another.

I

Henry Clay was born April 12, 1777, in Hanover County, Virginia. His family was distinguished for integrity, virtue, and sterling worth, but laid no claim to illustrious pedigree. Inheriting few worldly advantages, "he alone," like Napoleon, "was the architect of his fortune."

His father, John Clay, a Baptist clergyman, was remarkable, etc. [Details of John Clay's life follow.]

The general facts relating to Clay's birth and to the conditions under which he began his career belong in one paragraph; the detailed account of his father's life, in another.

I

For my G theme, I have written a story from real life, in which I have tried, so far as possible, to suppress the ideal in order to strengthen the real.

II

Henry Clay was born on April 12th, 1777, in Hanover County, Virginia. His family was distinguished for sterling worth, virtue, and integrity; but laid no claim to illustrious pedigree. By birth he received few worldly advantages, and like Napoleon "he alone was the architect of his fortune." His father, John Clay, was a Baptist clergyman, who was remarkable etc. [Details of John Clay's life follow.]

II

For my G theme I have written a story taken from real life. I have tried so far as possible to suppress the ideal for the sake of strengthening the realism of it.

¹ Teachers are recommended to confine their pupils' attention, for the present, to questions connected with the division by paragraphs. At a later stage, they may profitably use the examples in this and the succeeding chapters as exercises, and may ask their pupils to compare the original with the amended versions in point of punctuation, of phraseology, or of arrangement.

In my hero I have depicted, not a remarkably lovable character, but a simple everyday veteran of the poorer class, with no strong virtues to enlist the reader's sympathies. In Mary, the other principal character, I have tried to represent a thrifty, loveless, outspoken housewife, with a truthful but sharp tongue, which eventually drives the old man to his death.

In the first part of the theme, assuming acquaintance with the old man's feelings and thoughts, I have "stood in with" him. In the second part, taking the landlady's point of view, I have put the old man at a distance, beyond the circle of sympathy, in order to show his loneliness in the world—a loneliness which is emphasized by the somewhat ideal speech at the end of Part I.

If, with all this array of realism, I succeed in winning my reader's sympathy and holding his attention, I shall consider my story successful.

In the paragraph under II, the train of thought is not easy to follow; but much of the difficulty disappears when the passage is broken into four paragraphs. The first of the four speaks of the general plan of the story; the second, of the characters represented; the third, of the author's point of view; and the fourth, of his hope that the story will be successful.

My hero I have depicted as a not remarkably lovable character but a simple everyday veteran of the poorer class; he has no strong virtues to enlist the reader's sympathies. Mary, the other principal character, is a thrifty, loveless outspoken housewife. It is the cutting truth of her remarks that eventually drive the old veteran to his death. Through the first part the writer¹ has "stood in with" the old man, assumed acquaintance with his feelings and thoughts. In the second, he¹ takes the point of view of the landlady putting the old man at a distance, out of the circle of sympathy. This is, of course, to present the old man's loneliness in the world. The somewhat ideal speech at the end of Part I has its *raison d'être* in the fact that it emphasizes and strengthens this loneliness. If with all this array of realism I¹ succeed in getting my reader's sympathy and holding his attention, I shall consider my story successful.

¹ Notice the clumsy change of subject from "I" to "the writer" and "he," and then back again to "I" (see pages 131-133).

I

Will Honeycomb was a very agreeable companion. He was not only good-tempered, but was also able to talk in an interesting way about the topics of the day. Although he spent a great deal of his time in studying the fashions and gossiping, he was a pleasant man to meet at dinner, even for one who cared least about fashions. In other words, Will Honeycomb could and would adapt himself to his circumstances. We may not admire his foibles, probably most of us do not; but at all events we must agree that Will Honeycomb had that indefinable quality of affability which is found only in gentlemen.

On the other hand, it is certain that Honeycomb wasted his time. He certainly did not do much work; he certainly was not of much use to any one. This fact no one can deny. No matter how fond we may be of him, we cannot admire him; it is difficult even to respect him.

We shall have to class him, therefore, among those persons whom we are glad to have met, but for whom we have no great admiration.

II

Will Honeycomb was a very agreeable companion. He was not only good tempered, but was also able to talk in an interesting way about the topics of the day. Although he spent a great deal of his time studying the fashions and gossiping, he was a pleasant man to meet at dinner, even for the man who cared least about fashions.

In other words, Will Honeycomb could and would adapt himself to his circumstances. We may not admire his foibles, probably most of us do not, but at all events we must agree that Will Honeycomb had an indefinable quality of affability which is found only in gentlemen.

On the other hand, it is certain that Honeycomb wasted his time. He certainly did not do much work; he certainly was not of much use to any one. This fact no one can deny. No matter how fond we may be of him we cannot admire him, it is difficult even to respect him. We shall have to class him, therefore, as one of those persons whom we are glad to have met, but for whom we have no great admiration.

In the essay under II, the second paragraph, like the first, speaks of the pleasant side of Will Honeycomb's character. By making the two paragraphs one, we bring all that is said about his merits together, and thus empha-

size the contrast with his demerits as enumerated in the paragraph beginning with the phrase "On the other hand." The last sentence properly forms a paragraph by itself, for it sums up the preceding paragraphs.

II. HOW TO GET FROM PARAGRAPH TO PARAGRAPH

A good writer helps his reader to get from paragraph to paragraph with as little trouble as possible.

I

At the desire of the colonists, or, at least, with their consent, negroes were, in the course of a few years, introduced into all the other colonies.

What was the cause of this rapid growth of slavery?

II

Negroes were introduced into all the other colonies, in the course of a few years, at the desire of, or at least with the consent of the colonists.

What was the cause of this rapid growth of slavery?

In the amended version of this passage, the clause "negroes were, in the course of a few years, introduced into all the other colonies" is so placed that it leads to the question asked in the second paragraph.

I

His style was bright, sparkling, and effective, and his writings were always wholesome.

This last quality was doubtless due in part to his genuine passion for outdoor life; for the eyes of a man who likes to face the openness of sea and sky must be tolerably clear.

II

His style was bright sparkling and incisive, and his writings always wholesome.

Doubtless his genuine passion for outdoor life helped to give him this last quality. A man's eyes must be tolerably clear if he can love to face the openness of sea and sky.

In the amended version of this passage, the phrase "This last quality," which points back to the first paragraph, stands where it makes the connection plain.

I

People often refer to "the child's imagination," as if all children were equally gifted with the ability to personify objects and to change in fancy their own personalities. This supposition is altogether too sweeping; for many children have so little imagination that they look at everything from a severely practical point of view, and many others who join in games in which imagination plays a great part do so almost entirely in imitation of their playmates.

There are children, however, who do not merely imitate others but who have the real actor's instinct,—as the boy has who says to his brother, "Play you're a horse, and I'll drive you." With some, this desire to play they are something or somebody else begins at a very early age.

In the passage under II, the connection between the second paragraph and the first is far from plain. By inserting "however" near the beginning of the second paragraph, and by making a few other changes, we show what the connection really is.

Divide your compositions into paragraphs that correspond to the divisions of thought, and make the transition from paragraph to paragraph as smooth as possible.

II

People often refer to "the child's imagination" as if all children were gifted with the same great powers of personification of objects and fancied changes of personality. This is altogether too sweeping; many children have so little that they look at everything from a severely practical point of view, and many others who join in games where imagination plays a great part, do so almost entirely in imitation of their playmates.

In some children the desire to "play they are somebody else" begins at a very early age. It is not merely imitation but the real actor's instinct when a boy says to his brother "Play you're a horse and I'll drive you."

EXERCISE CLI

Show at what points paragraphs should be made in the essay marked "B" (page 347).

EXERCISE CLII

From some book prescribed for study, select two passages, — each containing two or more paragraphs, — one passage to be either a description or a narrative, the other a conversation. Give the substance of each paragraph in the first passage; refer each speech in the second passage to the proper speaker, and explain the purpose of whatever is not a part of the conversation.

EXERCISE CLIII

Break into paragraphs the following passage; ¹ give the topic of each paragraph: —

THE CAPTIVE

I sat down close to my table, and leaning my head upon my hand, I began to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. I was in a right frame for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination. I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow-creatures, born to no inheritance but slavery: but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitude of sad groups in it did but distract me—I took a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then looked through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture. I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer I saw him pale and feverish: in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood—he had seen no sun, no moon, in all that time—nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice:—his children—But here my heart began to bleed—and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait. He was sitting upon the ground upon a little straw, in the furthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed: a little calendar of small sticks were ² laid at the head, notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there—he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he

¹ Teachers may deem it advisable to ask their pupils to examine the punctuation of this passage from the point of view of modern usage.

² See page 199.

had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down — shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. — He gave a deep sigh — I saw the iron enter into ¹ his soul — I burst into tears — I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn. — STERNE.

EXERCISE CLIV

Amend the division by paragraphs in the following compositions: —

WOMEN AS TALKERS

If, as Mr. Palmer tells us, women are the best talkers, it is because their chatter is unstudied thought.

If a woman stopped to think what she was about to say, nine times out of ten she would never say it.

She would become self-conscious, angular in her choice of words, and halting in her speech.

ANTS AS WORKERS

Did you ever see an army of ants all hastening steadily toward one goal? I saw the entire company out this morning, as I was on my way to English A.

A myriad of these tiny creatures were hastening over a brick pavement, each dragging a load many times heavier than itself, and all going in the same direction.

One had a worm coiled like a snail into the smallest compass possible, with which it struggled bravely to cross the chasms and precipices of that uneven pavement.

MISS TROTWOOD AND DORA

I have read two hundred and twenty pages in the second volume of "David Copperfield."

Two character-pictures stand out from the others as masterly — Miss Trotwood and Dora.

Miss Trotwood's real nature is very skilfully made to seem one thing and be another; and we see that it is another even more clearly than if we were told so.

Dora's weak and useless little self first rouses in us a great deal of pity, and then leads us to begin to moralize.

¹ See page 319.

III. SENTENCES IN A PARAGRAPH

The sentences in a paragraph, like the paragraphs in a composition, should be so constructed as to enable the reader to pass from one to the next with as little trouble as possible.

I

Just as I was pulling on my boots, the nine o'clock bell rang. "There!" I cried; "that serves me right for lying in bed."

II

The nine o'clock bell rang just as I was pulling on my boots. "There," I said, "that serves me right for lying in bed!"

The first sentence under II is so framed as to connect the act of "pulling on my boots" with the exclamation "There!" in the second sentence, whereas the exclamation was really called out by the sound of the bell. In the passage as amended, this connection of thought is made plain by the change of order in the first sentence.

I

Though Lausanne is the capital of the canton of Vaud, it is a small place. Small as it is, it tries to appear even smaller.

II

Lausanne is a small place though it is the capital of the Canton of Vaud. It is small and yet it tries to appear even smaller.

By ending the first sentence with "small place" and beginning the second with "Small," we bind the two sentences together.

I

Near one end of the lake, and at our extreme left, lies the shadow of the hill. In that spot it is almost dark, and nothing can be distinguished.

II

Near one end of the lake, and at our extreme left, lies the shadow of the hill. It is almost dark in that spot and nothing can be distinguished.

By putting "In that spot" at the beginning of the second sentence, we show the connection between that sentence and the preceding one. "That" and "this," "those" and "these," often serve as connecting links between sentence and sentence or between paragraph and paragraph.

I

By this time a few flakes of snow were falling, and it was growing colder. Chilled by the long drive, and hungry as well, we were so quiet when we entered Southbridge that we were not called to order by the tutor, as we usually were when going through a town.

“Chilled by the long drive” points back to the first sentence.

I

To an American who has read “Tom Brown at Rugby,” the relations between the boys and the masters at St. Peter’s would be a surprise. In this school, none of the traditional “antagonism between teacher and pupil” exists,—a fact on which the whole scheme of moral and intellectual training rests.

In the paragraph under II, the connection of thought between the first sentence and the second is not clearly indicated; in the amended version, the connecting link is supplied by the phrase “In this school.” Whenever a word or a phrase is used to bring out sharply the connection of thought between two sentences, it should be put in the place where it serves this purpose best,—usually at the beginning of the second sentence.

I

Sometimes the monotony of school life was varied by holidays given to the boys as a reward for good behavior. This reward of merit came often to the church

II

By this time a few flakes of snow were falling, and it was growing colder. The tutor always called the boys to order when we passed through towns; but being hungry, and chilled by the long drive, we were quite orderly when we entered Southbridge.

II

To an American who has read “Tom Brown at Rugby,” the relations between the boys and masters¹ at St. Peter’s would be a surprise. None of the old-time “antagonism between teacher and pupil” exists: and on this fact the whole scheme of moral and intellectual training rests.

II

Sometimes the monotony of school life was varied by holidays, granted to the boys as a reward for good behavior. I had the good fortune to belong to the

¹ See pages 249-251.

choir (to which I had the good fortune to belong) in the shape of sleigh-rides and suppers. One of those choir sleigh-rides is the pleasantest, and at the same time the saddest, memory of my school-days.

church choir, — good fortune I called it because the choir was often treated to sleigh-rides and suppers. The pleasantest and at the same time the saddest memory of my school-days is one of those choir sleigh-rides.

In the first part of the paragraph under II, the fault is similar to that just noticed; by inserting the phrase "This reward of merit," we make the necessary connection between the first sentence and the second. In the last part of the paragraph, by transferring the phrase "one of those choir sleigh-rides" from the end to the beginning of the third sentence, we connect that sentence with the second.

I

There can be little doubt that the time will come when immigration into this country must be further restricted; but there are, in my opinion, two strong reasons why that time has not yet come, — a positive argument and a negative one. The positive argument is that the immigrants are a direct gain to the country, since they are necessary to develop its industries and its resources. The negative argument is that the immigrants are not harmful to American institutions, and do not compete injuriously with the American laborer.

II

There can be little doubt that the time will come when immigration into this country must be further restricted, but there are, in my opinion, two strong reasons why that time has not yet come. There is a positive argument and a negative argument. The immigrants are a direct gain to this country; and while their presence is necessary to develop its industries and its resources, they are not harmful to American institutions, nor do they compete injuriously with the American laborer.

In the paragraph under II, the second sentence does not clearly connect the third with the first. To enable the reader to grasp the meaning of the paragraph as a whole, it is necessary to reconstruct sentences and to supply missing links.

I

A few days ago, great consternation was created in our neighborhood by the unaccountable behavior of a strange dog, a great shaggy animal, who made his first appearance one afternoon as it was growing dark. For some time he stood in the street howling mournfully, and then walked slowly and sadly round the corner and out of sight. While he was uttering his ghostly howls, the old women who live in the "Home for Aged Women," opposite our house, stood at the windows watching him.

II

Great consternation was caused in our neighborhood a few days ago by the unaccountable behavior of a strange dog. One afternoon as it was growing dark the great shaggy animal appeared, stood howling mournfully in the street for some time, then walked slowly and sadly out of sight around the corner. Directly across the street from our house is a "Home for Aged Women." While the dog was uttering his ghostly unreasonable howls the old women stood at the windows watching.

In the paragraph under II, every sentence stands apart from every other. To make the connection of thought plain, it is necessary to reconstruct every sentence and to change the order of words in almost every line.

I

Attacking Massana the next day, Walker gained the first plaza; but to get possession in a like manner of the other plazas he would have had to sacrifice many lives. Recognizing this fact, he began a regular and slow approach.

II

The next day Walker attacked Massana, and gained the first plaza. But to get possession in a like manner of the other plazas would have necessitated great loss of life. Recognizing this, he began a regular and slow approach.

In the paragraph under II, the subject of the first sentence is "Walker," of the second the phrase "to get possession," etc., of the third "he"—that is, "Walker" again. This change in point of view obscures the connection of thought, and thus imposes unnecessary labor on the reader. In the amended version, "Walker" is kept as the subject throughout.

I

Landing near San Juan del Sur, they made for two days and nights forced marches, through a pelting storm, over wretched roads. In all—including a small troop of native soldiers—they numbered one hundred and sixty-five men, as against the six hundred who were in Rivas awaiting their attack.

Marching on the town, the Americans made a brave charge, and drove the Serviles through the narrow streets to the plaza.

In the second sentence of the passage under II, the reader is not confused by the change in point of view; but in the third he is, for, after having thus far been with the invading force, he suddenly finds himself with the invaded; in the fourth, he is taken back to the invaders. In the rewritten passage, the story of the invaders—"the Americans"—is told from their point of view throughout.

I

Walter Camp's story in yesterday's "Globe" gave me a new and favorable impression of this great Yale authority on foot-ball. It was happy in the blending of entertainment with instruction, excellent in purpose, and with a good moral. If it be true that a man must have in himself the qualities he portrays, it follows that the qualities of honor and uprightness of purpose, so marked in the hero of Walter Camp's story, must be in Walter Camp himself. He is, it is evident,

I

Landing near San Juan del Sur they made for two days and nights forced marches through a pelting storm over wretched roads. With them hurried a small troop of native soldiers making in all a force of 165 men. Waiting their attack in Rivas were 600 men.

The Americans charged bravely and drove the Serviles through the narrow streets of the town to the plaza.

II

I obtained a new and favorable impression of Walter Camp, the great Yale authority on foot-ball, from his story in yesterday's "Globe." The ability to write a story with such an excellent purpose, such a good moral, such a happy blending of entertainment and instruction, requires in the author the possession of the qualities he portrays. Expression is the correlative of impression. A man cannot express what is not in himself. Therefore the qualities of honor and uprightness of

much more than an athlete: he is a man.

purpose which were so marked in the hero of Walter Camp's story, must be in Walter Camp himself. It is plainly evident that he is a man, not only an athlete but a man.

The principal difficulty with the paragraph under II lies in the fact that the sentences are so framed as to keep the real subject (the story in the "Globe") in the background, and thus to change the point of view in appearance if not in fact. In the rewritten passage, this subject is introduced at the beginning and remains in view till the end. In both versions the same general remarks are made; but in the amended one the bearing of these remarks on the character of Camp is clearly brought out, partly by a change to the conditional form of sentence and partly by the omission of unnecessary words.

To make the transition from sentence to sentence as smooth as possible, use connecting links and keep the same general point of view.

EXERCISE CLV

Rewrite each passage in such a way as to make the connection between sentence and sentence plain: —

1. Jack came running round the corner just as the horses were starting. "Hurry up!" I shouted; "we are late already."

2. Henry Clay did not try, to use the words of Schurz, "to trim his sail to the wind, to truckle to the opinion of others, to carry water on both shoulders." His lack of success may be attributed to this cause.

3. A shirt waist is a garment for women and children, and is made like a shirt. It has three parts — front, back, and sleeves. The sleeves are made with stiff linen cuffs, and the neck is finished with a narrow band. These¹ waists are made with yokes or without yokes, and are plain, tucked, or embroidered, as the taste of the wearer may prescribe. The back is generally plain. The sleeve, always in one piece, may be a plain coat sleeve, a bishop sleeve, or a sleeve similar to that

¹ To what does "these" refer?

in a shirt. The front and back¹ of the waist are stitched together, and are fitted over the shoulders but left loose under the arms. The sleeve is set in so that the seam comes under the arm.²

4. A little later I witnessed William's escape, when Mrs. Todd had taken the foolish risk of going down cellar. There was a horse and wagon outside the garden fence, and presently we stood where we could see him driving up the hill with thoughtless speed.

EXERCISE CLVI

Rewrite each passage in such a way as to keep one point of view :—

The unpopularity of one of these tutors raised a rebellion at Yale. Edwards does not appear to have taken any part in the outbreak.

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD

A very interesting four-year-old child lives in my street. Since she has been able to talk, every passer-by must answer some question. If he happens to have a bunch of flowers, he rarely passes without her asking for one. If he has only one flower, she will ask for it, feeling well satisfied if she receives a petal. Last June this little one, on asking a girl for an azalea and receiving one of the petals, took her flower in to her mother for her to admire it.

AN EVENING AT HOME

Last night we had a musicale at our house, to which about fifteen ladies and gentlemen had been invited. It was a very informal affair, and every one who could sing a song or play a tune contributed his mite to the general enjoyment of the company, without being begged.

Dr. L. had brought his cornet; we sent Jack home for his violin; there was a banjo and a guitar.

A very attractive young woman accompanied the singers on the piano.³

THE SQUIRRELS OF CAMBRIDGE

Since my coming to Cambridge, I have been highly interested in the frisky little squirrels that seem to be everywhere.

¹ See pages 249-251.

² In rewriting this paragraph, bring together the details about each part of the waist.

³ Amend the division by paragraphs, and make the connection between sentence and sentence plain.

If you¹ take a walk early in the morning, you can see them running along on the public highways, from one side of the street to the other. Now they are up one tree and down another as lively as you please, seemingly very sure that no harm will come to them.

LOUISTON

This city of about eight thousand inhabitants faces the Mississippi, and is located² about ninety miles north of St. Louis, between and on the sides of three beautiful hills.

No place has more natural advantages than Louiston, with its navigable river front, its three railroads, and its rich agricultural surroundings. We need some energetic and progressive person to start a summer resort by building residences upon the beautiful bluffs, thereby showing³ the inhabitants that they⁴ may be used for other purposes than⁵ pastures for cows.

Our greatest need is a first-class sewerage system. The health of the inhabitants demands it, as⁶ they suffer from the much-dreaded malaria, fevers of all kinds, and chills. All these diseases could be easily prevented by the right kind of a⁷ sewerage system. The natural drainage is toward the river, therefore the expense of the proceeding would be much lessened. Through the centre of the town runs a small creek, that could be used to great advantage as a part of the sewerage system.

¹ See pages 131-133.

² See page 231.

³ To what does this participle belong?

⁴ To what does this pronoun refer?

⁵ Is any other word needed?

⁶ See page 328.

⁷ See page 246.

CHAPTER II

SENTENCES

I. LONG OR SHORT SENTENCES?

SOME writers prefer long sentences to short, others short to long; but it is far less important that a sentence should be of a certain length than that it should conform to the English idiom and should present a single idea with distinctness. A sentence, whether short or long, that is heterogeneous in substance and obscure or confused in form is a bad sentence.

Try again.

Haste makes waste.

Whatever is, is right.

Our antagonist is our helper.

There's no such word as "fail."

Enough is as good as a feast.

When bad men conspire, good men must combine.

As the church door was open, I stepped in.

The young prince, for all his cleverness, was not happy.

A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream.

One would think that in personifying itself a nation would be apt to picture something grand, heroic, and imposing, but it is characteristic of the peculiar humor of the English, and of their love for what is blunt, comic, and familiar, that they have embodied their national oddities in the figure of a sturdy, corpulent old fellow, with a three-cornered hat, red waistcoat, leather breeches, and stout oaken cudgel.

Although the last sentence, which comes from Washington Irving, contains precisely the same number of words (sixty-nine) as all the other sentences taken together, it is

so arranged that a reader of ordinary intelligence, far from being confused by its length, goes with ease and speed from word to word and from clause to clause.

Mingled with the more headlong and half-drunken crowd there were some sharp-visaged men who loved the irrationality of riots for something else than its own sake, and who at present were not so much the richer as they desired to be, for the pains they had taken in coming to the Treby election, induced by certain prognostics gathered at Duffield on the nomination-day that there might be the conditions favorable to that confusion which was always a harvest-time.

This sentence from George Eliot, though it contains only nine words more than that quoted from Irving, is much more difficult to follow. The difficulty lies partly in the fact that the main assertion in the sentence — the assertion that in the crowd were some would-be thieves — is not plainly expressed, and partly in the unwieldiness of the last part of the sentence, beginning with the word “induced.”

I cannot, from observation, form any decided opinion as to the extent in which this strange delight in nature influences the hearts of young persons in general; and, in stating what has passed in my own mind, I do not mean to draw any positive conclusion as to the nature of the feeling in other children;¹ but the inquiry is clearly one in which personal experience is the only safe ground to go upon, though a narrow one; and I will make no excuse for talking about myself with reference to this subject, because, though there is much egotism in the world, it is often the last thing a man thinks of doing, — and, though there is much work to be done in the world, it is often the best thing a man can do, — to tell the exact truth about the movements of his own mind; and there is this farther reason, that whatever other faculties I may or may not possess, this gift of taking pleasure in landscape I assuredly possess in a greater degree than most men; it having been the ruling passion of my life, and the reason for the choice of its field of labor.

¹ Perhaps a colon here would have marked the division of thought more plainly than the semicolon does.

In the first part of this sentence (extending to the semicolon after "children"), Ruskin says that he does not "mean to draw any positive conclusion" from his own experience that shall apply to other children. In the second part (extending to the semicolon after "mind"), he says that he considers personal experience as "the only safe ground to go upon," and that he will make no excuse for talking about himself because often the best thing a man can do is "to tell the exact truth about the movements of his own mind." In the third and last part, he gives as a further reason for talking about himself the fact that he possesses in a greater degree than most men the "gift of taking pleasure in landscape." As a whole, this sentence is well put together. In the last half of the second part, it is true, some obscurity arises from the ambiguous position of the two clauses "it is often the last thing a man thinks of doing" and "it is often the best thing a man can do": a hasty reader might suppose that "it" points back to the clause "I will make no excuse for talking about myself," instead of pointing forward to the phrase "to tell the exact truth," etc. In spite of this obscurity, the care with which the author keeps the subject-matter which belongs in each part of the sentence within that part makes the sentence as a whole easy of comprehension.

In the work of young writers, long sentences are so often obscure that teachers of English sometimes condemn them altogether, as the late Dr. E. A. Freeman is reported to have done. The story runs that, during that distinguished historian's visit to this country some years ago, he happened to be in a college class-room while a teacher of English composition was laboriously trying to make a young woman understand what she must do to improve her style. "Tell her," broke in Dr. Freeman, who was not the most patient of men, "tell her to write short sentences."

For that particular case, Dr. Freeman's advice may have been the best possible. It is certainly the best for girls and boys at a certain stage of development, when their besetting sin is an addiction to long sentences—a sin often caused by obscurity or confusion of thought. At a later stage, if, as not infrequently happens, their compositions contain an irritating number of short sentences, they should be taught how to express themselves clearly in sentences of moderate length.

Advantages of the Long Sentence.—An idea which is so simple in itself and so simply expressed that it can be grasped at once by a reader of ordinary intelligence should, as a rule, be expressed in one moderately long sentence that presents the idea as a whole. Of such a sentence Macaulay furnishes a good example:—

They had tried to blast his honor and to exclude him from his birthright; they had called him incendiary, cutthroat, poisoner; they had driven him from the Admiralty and the Privy Council; they had repeatedly chased him into banishment; they had plotted his assassination; they had risen against him in arms by thousands.

This sentence is obviously better as it stands than it would be if divided into six short sentences, for it brings the particulars enumerated so closely together as to show that they form a whole. In this case, the difference between two ways of saying the same thing is merely a matter of punctuation; but this difference is important.

I

The lugger was ready in the river, the wind was steady from the east, the weather promised well, and Blake hurried him on board.

II

The lugger was ready in the river. The wind was steady from the east. The weather promised well and Blake hurried him on board.

The three sentences under II stand apart from one another. By making them one sentence in form, we show that they are one in substance, and thus give speed to the narrative.

I

An attempt made by the government of Madras to relieve the place had failed; but there was hope from another quarter.

II

An attempt made by the government of Madras to relieve the place had failed. But there was hope from another quarter.

By putting the two assertions connected by "but" into one sentence, we bring out at once the contrast intended.

I

Strong and eccentric minds may rise superior to public opinion, as they did at Athens in the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ, a period during which literature and science flourished. When, however, the great minds of that period passed away, public opinion conquered individuality.

II

Strong and eccentric minds may rise superior to public opinion. They did at Athens in the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ. Then literature and science flourished. But at last those great minds passed away and public opinion conquered individuality.

In this example, by making two sentences out of four, and by binding the parts of each of the two together by words that show the exact relation between the parts, we help the reader to catch at a glance the meaning of the passage as a whole.

II

When Lucy heard that Thomas Parker had decided to go to England, either on business or because he could not get along with her father, she felt secretly happy; for she believed that the discord between the two families would now be at an end.

Thomas Parker had decided to go to England, either because he could not get along with Lucy's father, or on business. When she had heard it, she had felt secretly happy, as the discord between the two families would then be at an end.

The connection between the two sentences under II is obscure, partly because of defects in arrangement, and partly because of an awkward change from Parker's point of view to Lucy's. It is better to throw the two sentences into one that is so framed as to make "she felt secretly happy" the main clause.

Advantages of the Short Sentence. — An idea that cannot be caught at once by a reader of ordinary intelligence should, as a rule, be expressed in several short sentences rather than in one long sentence. That which is difficult to grasp when presented as a whole — either because the subject is unfamiliar or because the main thought is clouded by qualifications — may be easy to get hold of, part by part.

In days when scholars with plenty of leisure formed the reading public, authors — Clarendon and Milton, for instance — wrote sentences much longer than authors of the present day write. At the beginning of the eighteenth century there was a marked change; but even Defoe's sentences are longer than would now be printed in books intended for general reading. One such sentence from his most famous work is given below, under II : —

I

I now began to consider that I might yet get a great many things out of the ship which would be useful to me, and particularly some of the rigging and sails, and such other things as might come to land; and I resolved to make another voyage on board the vessel, if possible. As I knew that the first storm that blew must necessarily break her all in pieces, I resolved to set all other things apart, till I got everything out of the ship that I could get. Then I called a council (that is to say, in my thoughts) whether I should take back the raft; but this appeared impracticable. So I resolved to go as before, when the tide was down; and I did so, except that I stripped

II

I now began to consider, that I might yet get a great many Things out of the Ship, which would be useful to me, and particularly some of the Rigging, and Sails, and such other Things as might come to Land, and I resolved to make another Voyage on Board the Vessel, if possible; and as I knew that the first Storm that blew must necessarily break her all in Pieces, I resolv'd to set all other Things apart, 'till I got every Thing out of the Ship that I could get; then I call'd a Council, that is to say, in my Thoughts, whether I should take back the Raft, but this appear'd impracticable; so I resolv'd to go as before, when the Tide was down, and I did so, only that

before I went from my hut, having nothing on but a checkered shirt and a pair of linen drawers, and a pair of pumps on my feet.

I stripp'd before I went from my Hut, having nothing on but a Chequer'd Shirt, and a Pair of Linnen Drawers, and a Pair of Pumps on my Feet.

The sentence under II (one hundred and sixty-two words in all), which is copied verbatim from a facsimile of the first edition of "Robinson Crusoe," a modern writer would have put into several sentences, framed somewhat after the fashion of those under I. Here again the difference between the two forms is chiefly a matter of punctuation.¹

I

The latest attempt to disprove the report is that of Jesse H. Jones, who gives a detailed narrative of the silver-ware episode. He charges a clerk at General Butler's headquarters with forging the General's signature to the order which confiscated the plate, and with enriching himself with the plunder.

II

The latest attempt to disprove the report is that of Jesse H. Jones, who gives a detailed narrative of the silver-ware episode, charging a clerk at Gen. Butler's headquarters with forging the general's signature to the order confiscating the plate and enriching himself with the plunder.

The sentence under II, though much shorter than that quoted from Defoe, is more difficult to follow. By breaking it into two sentences, and by getting rid of the jumble of words in "-ing," we make the meaning plain.

I

I shall merely try to give a short sketch of those features of the social condition of France which have most impressed me. I shall emphasize the wide class distinctions, and shall show some of the oppressive and vexatious burdens under which the people struggled.

II

I shall merely try to give a short sketch of the chief features of the social condition of France which have most impressed me, emphasizing the wide class distinctions, and showing some of the oppressive and vexatious burdens under which the people struggled.

¹ See page 367.

Thus the autumn passed away in literary, athletic, and social pursuits; and at last, after several examinations, Thanksgiving Day came. I was lucky enough to have friends with whom I could spend the day; but others, less fortunate, ate their turkey and cranberries at Memorial Hall.

To return to the subject of Mr. Collins and Miss Bennet. It is amusing to see the mingled surprise and wrath of this prim and conventional lover when the lady refuses him. His feeling is so evenly divided between the two that one can hardly tell which is predominant. At last his anger gets the better of his surprise, and with a look of the greatest contempt he stalks proudly out of the room.

In each of the paragraphs under II, too many ideas are crowded into a single sentence, and the construction is so clumsy as to obscure the relations between these ideas. Broken into two or three sentences, each paragraph is smoother as well as clearer.

As between long and short sentences, choose the kind best adapted to the purpose in hand.

EXERCISE CLVII

Make one sentence of each paragraph; insert a conjunction when one will help to bring out the meaning: —

1. Most men urge that the present system of education be extended. But they imply, if they do not show clearly, that they speak of the public schools only.

¹ Would changes in punctuation make this sentence less obscure?

Thus the autumn passed away in studies, boating, and social pursuits; till, after several examinations, Thanksgiving Day came, when I was lucky enough to have friends with whom I spent the day; while the less fortunate ones ate their turkey and cranberries at Memorial Hall.

To return to the subject of Mr. Collins and Miss Bennet, it is most amusing when the latter has refused her prim and conventional lover, to see his mingled surprise and wrath, it is so evenly divided that one can hardly tell which is predominant, finally his anger gets the better of his surprise and with a look of utmost contempt he stalks proudly out of the room.¹

2. In a minute we were rounding the point, Edward at the helm. It was his cat, and neither brother ever takes the helm of the other's boat.

3. Of course there are certain authors that should be read somewhat by everybody. Everybody, however, should be allowed the privilege of choosing for himself.

4. The children expected to spend the whole day on the common. It was a lively place on training day. There would be a review, and perhaps a sham fight.

5. It was a great town for old maids. In our street there was scarcely a house that did not harbor three or more.

6. Vivid impressions, made in the excitement of great enthusiasm, are very lasting. We find ourselves recurring again and again to the incidents of the foot-ball game at Springfield.¹

EXERCISE CLVIII

Make two or three sentences of each paragraph; omit superfluous connectives, and make other necessary or desirable changes:—

1. Thus, from first to last, in France as in Rome, the ² coins form an index of ³ the changing political and social state of the kingdom and of the people; rising or falling with every rise or fall in their civilization, they afford within themselves ⁴ an eloquent commentary on the history of the nation.⁵

2. The American Ethnographical Exhibition, as planned by Professor Putnam, is intended to present a living picture of the actual home life of typical native peoples in different parts of America, from the Arctic regions to the island of Tierra del Fuego, including many tribes of the United States Indians which will be represented, thanks to the coöperation of the United States Indian Office, and will take their proper place among the native peoples of America.⁶

¹ In making one sentence out of these two, reverse the order, and bind the two parts together by means of the appropriate conjunction.

² A superfluous article (see page 246).

³ "Are an index to" is better than "form an index of."

⁴ "Within themselves" does not go well with "commentary," and is, moreover, an unnecessary phrase.

⁵ "National history" is better than "history of the nation"; "history," the important word, should end the sentence.

⁶ End the first sentence with "Tierra del Fuego," and begin the second with the phrase "Thanks to the coöperation of the United States Indian Office."

3. The brakeman on our car was evidently a new hand at the business¹ and had not yet acquired the brusqueness of his trade, for he kept going through the car, opening ventilators and windows and shutting blinds whenever he thought the comfort of the passengers could thereby be increased, until he had attracted much favorable comment on his thoughtfulness.

4. The progress of events in Australia must be watched with interest by every student of political science, for it offers a rare opportunity to study the foundation of a new government and of a new form of government; and by every alert citizen of the United States, because it shows a people, akin to his own, trying to gain peacefully under the crown what his forefathers gained a hundred years ago by war and revolt from the crown.²

5. As we were three miles from any house in which I could obtain shelter, I was afraid of catching a severe cold, but trying to make the best of it I started to run those three miles and thus keep warm.

II. PERIODIC OR LOOSE SENTENCES?

Sentences are either periodic or loose.

PERIODIC

From start to finish, the race was a plucky one.

LOOSE

The race was a plucky one from start to finish.

This example shows a periodic and a loose sentence side by side. The periodic is not a sentence till the end is reached, for till then it does not express a complete thought; the loose would be a sentence if it stopped at "one," for it would still express a complete thought.

The difference between a periodic and a loose sentence may be further exemplified by two passages, the first (periodic) from Scott's "Old Mortality," the second (loose) from Thackeray's "Roundabout Papers":—

¹ Make "was evidently a new hand at the business" a parenthetic relative clause.

² Make three sentences,—the first telling to what classes of persons the subject is interesting, the second telling why it is interesting to the student of political science, the third why it is interesting to the citizen of the United States; or make two sentences, with a semicolon between the two parts of the second sentence.

Amid this scene of blood and confusion, the trampling of the horses, the groans of the wounded, the continued fire of the enemy, which fell in a succession of unintermitted musketry, while loud shouts accompanied each bullet which the fall of a trooper showed to have been successfully aimed — amid all the terrors and disorders of such a scene, and when it was dubious how soon they might be totally deserted by their dispirited soldiery, Evandale could not forbear remarking the composure of his commanding officer.

What a day was that last day at home, when the tall brother sat yet amongst the family, the little ones round about him wondering at saddle-boxes, uniforms, sword-cases, gun-cases, and other wondrous apparatus of war and travel which poured in and filled the hall; the new dressing-case for the beard not yet grown; the great sword-case at which little brother Tom looks so admiringly!

Advantages of the Periodic Sentence. — When a sentence is so short and so simple in construction that the meaning as a whole can be caught at once by a reader of ordinary intelligence, the periodic form is usually preferable to the loose.

PERIODIC

Without being told, he brought me two plates of steak.

So far as the spectators were concerned, it was a poor day for the race.

Though there were ten eggs in the nest, only one chicken was hatched.

Bitter as the moment was to the old man, the command was one which he dared not disobey.

LOOSE

He brought me two plates of steak without being told.

It was a poor day for the race so far as the spectators were concerned.

There were ten eggs in the nest, but only one chicken was hatched.

It was a bitter moment to the old man, but it was a command he dared not disobey.

In each of these examples, the construction is so simple that the periodic is preferable to the loose form.

PERIODIC

The concerts are not only pleasing to ordinary hearers but also instructive to students of music.

LOOSE

The concerts are pleasing to ordinary hearers as well as instructive to students of music.

They talk more for the fun of the fray and the joy of contradiction than for the sake of hearing what is said on the other side.

They talk for the fun of the fray and the joy of contradiction rather than in order really to hear what is said against them.

In each of these examples, the periodic sentence is preferable to the loose because it brings out the meaning more clearly. In the first periodic sentence, the idea in the phrase beginning with "not only" looks forward to that in the phrase beginning with "but also"; in the second, "more" looks forward to "than." In the loose sentences, the phrases beginning with "as well as" and "rather than" come as afterthoughts.

PERIODIC

As signs of a squall appeared, Captain Sands reefed his sails.

Having read in the late eclipse of the moon signs that we should not score in the game with Yale, I did not go to Springfield. As there were only a few men in the great room, the professor omitted his usual lecture.

LOOSE

Signs of a squall appeared,¹ so Captain Sands reefed his sails.

I had read signs in the late eclipse of the moon that we should not score against Yale,¹ so I did not go to Springfield. There were but a knot of men in the great room,¹ so the professor omitted his usual lecture.

The loose forms of these sentences exemplify a way of putting things which is characteristic of unpractised writers: "so" does not unite the two clauses which it appears to connect; it is hardly a stepping-stone from one to the other. At the beginning of a sentence, "so" is often—in books for children, for instance—a simple and convenient substitute for "therefore" or "hence"; but the use of it in this sense in the middle of a sentence usually indicates a slipshod habit of mind.

Advantages of the Loose Sentence.—When the periodic form would obscure the meaning of a sentence, or

¹ Is the comma the best mark of punctuation here?

would sound affected or declamatory, the loose form is better.

LOOSE

I was going rapidly ahead with my physics and my metaphysics alike, — upon all lines of advance, in short, that interested my ambition.

The true principles of contract appear to us to forbid allowing an action to a third party from whom no consideration moves and who is in no way privy to the agreement.

Our house is shut in on both sides by a tangled forest, from whose² coverts the quail's note is often heard; and it looks across a level marsh of ever-varying green to the blue waters of the bay beyond.

PERIODIC

Equally, in fact, as regarded my physics and my metaphysics; in short, upon all lines of advance that interested my ambition, I was going rapidly ahead.¹

The true principles of contract appear to us to forbid the allowing a third party, from whom no consideration moves and who is in no way privy to the agreement, an action.

Flanked on both sides by tangled forests, from whose² coverts the quail's note is often heard and looking across a level marsh, of ever-varying green, to the blue waters of the Bay beyond, stands our house.

In each of these examples, the loose sentence is preferable to the periodic for the reason that it follows the natural English order, the order in which the words would naturally come to an English-speaking person who was thinking more about what he wanted to say than about forms of expression. These examples are enough to show that the sweeping advice sometimes given to young writers that they should make their sentences periodic may mislead them.

Sentences partly Periodic, partly Loose. — Often the best sentence for the purpose in hand is neither wholly periodic nor wholly loose: it is a combination of the two. For example: —

¹ Quoted from De Quincey in William Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature."

² See page 127.

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and, as I slept, I dreamed a dream.

Although this sentence is, as a whole, loose, it begins like a periodic sentence, and would be one if it stopped at "place." It stands at the beginning of "The Pilgrim's Progress," a book written in a colloquial style throughout, and therefore containing few sentences that are even so nearly periodic as that just quoted, as is evident to any one who will take the trouble to read a few pages of Bunyan.

If then the power of speech is a gift as great as any that can be named, — if the origin of language is by many philosophers even considered to be nothing short of divine, — if by means of words the secrets of the heart are brought to light, pain of soul is relieved, hidden grief is carried off, sympathy conveyed, counsel imparted, experience recorded, and wisdom perpetuated, — if by great authors the many are drawn up into unity, national character is fixed, a people speaks, the past and the future, the East and the West are brought into communication with each other, — if such men are, in a word, the spokesmen and prophets of the human family, — it will not answer to make light of Literature or to neglect its study; rather we may be sure that, in proportion as we master it in whatever language, and imbibe its spirit, we shall ourselves become in our own measure the ministers of like benefits to others, be they many or few, be they in the obscurer or the more distinguished walks of life, — who are united to us by social ties, and are within the sphere of our personal influence.¹

This long sentence — which comes from a university lecture by Cardinal Newman, who is master of a style very different from that of Bunyan — appears at first sight to be periodic in form; but it is not, for it might have stopped at "Literature," or "study," or "others," or "few," or "life," or "ties."

Choose that form of sentence — periodic, loose, or partly periodic and partly loose — which is best adapted to the purpose in hand.

¹ For another example, see the sentence from Irving, quoted on page 364.

EXERCISE CLIX

Change the form of each sentence from loose to periodic : —

1. This was forbidden by taste as well as by judgment.
2. His acts were frequently censured ; but his character was above reproach.
3. I shall not vote for this measure unless it is clearly constitutional.
4. What is flour worth in gold, if it costs \$10 a barrel in silver?
5. I didn't know anybody there, so I made up my mind that eating would be the most profitable way of passing the time.
6. The college-bred aspirant for newspaper honors is still regarded with aversion by the editor¹ of the old school, who worked his way up from the case and who in his early days handled his stick and galley far more correctly than he now does his pen.

EXERCISE CLX

Change the form of each sentence from periodic to loose : —

1. Either with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot, he kept himself alive.
2. When there's anybody worth talking to, he can talk.
3. Because I leave these calls unmade, I am thought a boor.
4. Although we must admit that in athletic contests success has a real value in keeping up an interest in the sports and thus encouraging exercise, it is not the sole aim.
5. Those whose faith or whose fanaticism led them to believe themselves soldiers of the Almighty, and who in that dread enlistment feared nothing but to be found unworthy of their calling, were gone.

EXERCISE CLXI

In a page of some book you are reading, pick out the periodic sentences, the loose sentences, and those which are partly periodic and partly loose.²

¹ Make "the editor," etc., the subject.

² The best page for this purpose is one that contains sentences of various kinds, including some conversation. The exercise may be oral.

CHAPTER III

WORDS AND PHRASES

I. A WORKING VOCABULARY

OTHER things being equal, it is obvious that a man whose stock of words is small is less likely to find in his assortment the word which exactly expresses his meaning than a man who has a large number of words to choose from. It is, therefore, worth while for a young writer to keep his ears open while conversation is going on about him and his eyes open while he is reading, and to note and remember every word that is new to him either in itself or in the meaning given to it. He may thus, while avoiding both vulgarisms and high-flown expressions, enrich his vocabulary by drawing from the racy idioms of plain people and from the best utterances of great authors, — the two sources of life in a language. If he is a student of other tongues, whether ancient or modern, he may make his work in translation a third means of adding to his stock of English. "Translation," said Rufus Choate, "should be pursued to bring to mind and to employ all the words you already own, and to tax and torment invention and discovery and the very deepest memory for additional, rich, and admirably expressive words."

It would, of course, be absurd for a boy to have constantly in mind the desirability of enlarging his vocabulary; but if he keeps his ears and eyes open in the schoolroom and out of it, he will be surprised to find how rapidly his vocabulary grows. "When I was a boy," Lincoln is reported to have said, "I used to hear the neighbors talking, and it bothered me so because I could not under-

stand them that I used to sit up half the night thinking things out for myself. I remember that I did not know what the word *demonstrate* meant. So I stopped my studies then and there and got a volume of Euclid. Before I got through I could *demonstrate* everything in it, and I have never been bothered with *demonstrate* since.”¹

Overworked Words. — A writer whose stock of words is small necessarily demands too much work from the few at his command. One whose resources are larger but who is too lazy to profit by them overworks words that are at his tongue's end, and underworks others. Even a good writer may have favorite expressions that are constantly getting into his sentences, as King Charles the First's head kept getting into Mr. Dick's "Memorial."² Matthew Arnold, for example, at one time talked so persistently about "culture" as to make the word a public nuisance; and Emerson had occasion, it is said, to thank a friend for calling his attention to a phrase which he had used too often for the comfort of his readers.

In this matter, young writers can hardly be expected to attain ideal excellence; but they may at least have pet words of their own instead of using those that are in everybody's mouth. They may refrain from calling everything that they like *elegant* or *splendid*,³ and everything that they dislike *beastly* or *disgusting* or *dreadful* or *horrid*. Such words are to be avoided, not because they are objectionable in themselves, but because they have been used so often and for so many purposes that their virtue has gone out of them.

Some words have been overworked for many years. *Nice*, for example, was condemned by Jane Austen more than three generations ago: —

¹ Quoted by Winston Churchill, in "The Crisis."

² See Dickens's "David Copperfield."

³ "Splendid" is a word against which Mr. — [a living American author] should particularly be on his guard; for, used as indiscriminately as he uses it, it produces a sense of fatigue in the reader, and leaves no possibility of legitimate climax to the writer. — The Spectator [19th century].

"I am sure," cried Catherine, "I did not mean to say anything wrong ; but it is a nice book, and why should not I call it so?"

"Very true," said Henry, "and this is a very nice day ; and we are taking a very nice walk ; and you are two very nice young ladies. Oh, it is a very nice word, indeed !—it does for everything. Originally, perhaps, it was applied only to express neatness, propriety, delicacy, or refinement ;—people were nice in their dress, in their sentiments, or their choice. But now every commendation on every subject is comprised in that one word."

"While, in fact," cried his sister, "it ought only to be applied to you, without any commendation at all. You are more nice than wise."¹

Awfully, which years ago entered the service of the society that calls itself "smart," is still on both sides of the Atlantic a word of all work. *Nasty* and *jolly*, which have long haunted certain circles in England (an Englishwoman spoke of Florida as "jolly dull"), are not yet, in the English meaning, domesticated here ; but *chaste*, *fierce*, *gorgeous*, *great*, *intense*, *lurid*, *rank*, *weird*, are constantly applied to things that are far from deserving these epithets. Among other overworked expressions are *atmosphere*, *clean-cut*, *clear-cut*, *environment*, *handicapped*, *immensely*, *paralyzed*, *side issues*, *tremendously*, *voice* (as a verb), *along these lines*, *consensus of opinion*, *in this connection*, *in touch with*, *put in an appearance*, *that goes without saying*, *under the auspices of*.²

Avoid overworked words.

EXERCISE CLXII

In place of each italicized expression, substitute one that is not overworked :—

1. The "Springfield Republican" *voices* popular sentiment when it observes that to *wipe out* Boston's board of apportionment after a trial of less than five months is boys' play.

¹ Northanger Abbey. For the history of "nice," see Greenough and Kittredge's "Words and their Ways in English Speech," and W. B. Hodgson's "Errors in the Use of English."

² For other words that are overworked, see pages 98-101, 231-232.

2. The object is to show the community how existing conditions may be improved *along the lines* of municipal reform.
3. His force as a personality all felt who came *in touch with* him.
4. You look *real nice*.
5. There is a *consensus of opinion* between the general and me.
6. He growled that the book was *jolly rot*.
7. It is *beastly* uninteresting diet.
8. You do an *awful lot*¹ of work.
9. *In this connection*, let me say that the entertainment was *under the auspices of* the best set in Chicago.
10. She is *awfully* pretty.
11. Macaulay gives *clear-cut* pictures of authors in Grub Street.
12. Teachers have not been indoctrinated *along thinking lines*.
13. We like the place *immensely*.
14. That gown is *powerfully* pretty.

II. BOOKISH OR LIVING WORDS?

A young writer sometimes loads his compositions with words that he would not naturally use in speaking or writing, words that he has caught up from a book because he thought they sounded well or were out of the common. Properly used, books, as we have seen, are among the most valuable means of enlarging one's vocabulary; but they may encumber it with expressions that are no longer in the living language. To such expressions, those that are in colloquial but not in literary use are to be preferred; even slang, the vulgar part of the spoken language, is better than pedantic phrases, the dead or dying part of the written language. "The writing which has least the appearance of literary manufacture," says Maria Edgeworth, "always pleases me the best." Good authors use words like human beings, not like parrots or machines; but even good authors occasionally fall into what may be called the literary dialect.

Bookish words, bad enough in themselves, become far worse when used by one who does not know what they mean.

¹ See page 99.

The prevalence of such words in written work at school or college is a pretty sure sign either that the writer has nothing to say on the subject in hand or that he takes no interest in what he is writing. Regarding his composition as an irksome task, associating it with his work rather than with his play, he does not put his real self behind his pen, but relies on his remembrance of something he has read to supply him with words—and, probably, also with thoughts—which he but half understands. He may profitably bear in mind what Dryden says in a famous passage that is as true to-day as it was when he wrote it: “There are many, who understand Greek and Latin, and yet are ignorant of their mother-tongue. The proprieties and delicacies of the English are known to few; it is impossible even for a good wit to understand and practise them, without the help of a liberal education, long reading, and digesting of those few good authors we have amongst us, the knowledge of men and manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both sexes; and, in short, without wearing off the rust which he contracted while he was laying in a stock of learning.”

Prefer living to bookish words.

EXERCISE CLXIII

Rewrite each passage in your own words; avoid bookish expressions:—

1. He had elected to sleep in his dressing-room.
2. The stranger bowed his head at the stricken cry which his news elicited from the priest.
3. Mr. Fiske is a lucid transmitter of historical complications.
4. His sentences are not only perspicuous, but they are comprehensive of the data handled and singularly suggestive of underlying principles and motives.
5. Bassanio is a poor gentleman of Venice, whose faint means do not allow continuance in high living. His youth was somewhat too prodigal. Having fallen in love with Portia, a lady of Belmont and lacking proper means to hold a rival place among the many suitors

who flock to Belmont as to Colchis strand¹ entreats his bosom friend, Antonio, to supply his ripe wants. Antonio nothing loath, unlocks all his occasions for his friend.²

6. "The poetry of motion" is a phrase much in use, and to enjoy the epic form of that gratification it is necessary to stand on a hill at a small hour of the night, and, first enlarging the consciousness with the sense of difference from the mass of civilized mankind, who are horizontal and disregarding of all such proceedings at this time, long and quietly watch your stately progress through the stars. After such a nocturnal reconnoitre among these astral clusters, aloft from the customary haunts of thought and vision, some men may feel raised to a capability for eternity at once.²

7. I have been led farther than I had foreseen, and various subjects for annotation have presented themselves which, though I have no direct need of them, I could not pretermit. The task, notwithstanding the assistance of my amanuensis, has been a somewhat laborious one, but your society has happily prevented me from that too continuous prosecution of thought beyond the hours of study which has been the snare of my solitary life. — GEORGE ELIOT.

8. Notwithstanding these oracles, the greatness of the Flavian family (a name which it had pleased them to assume) was deferred above twenty years, and the elevation of Claudius occasioned the immediate ruin of his brother Quintilius, who possessed not sufficient moderation or courage to descend into the private station to which the patriotism of the late emperor had condemned him. Without delay or reflection, he assumed the purple at Aquileia, where he commanded a considerable force; and though his reign lasted only seventeen days, he had time to obtain the sanction of the senate, and to experience a mutiny of the troops. — GIBBON.

III. SHORT OR LONG WORDS?

Some writers insist that short words should invariably be preferred to long ones, on the ground that they come from the Anglo-Saxon or from early English; but, as a matter of fact, long words are sometimes preferable, not because they come from this or that language, but because

¹ What word is omitted?

² Written by a student in Harvard College.

they serve the writer's purpose best. The great majority of short words are, it is true, of Anglo-Saxon origin, and most of these are so familiar as to be generally understood; but others almost equally familiar come from the Latin, as "add," "fact," "mob," "street"; others from the French, "cab," "cash," "pork," "quart," "zeal"; others from the Italian, "duel," "floss," "lava"; others from the Spanish, "cask," "cork"; others from the Dutch, "boom" (in the sense of "spar"), "boor," "gulp," "sloop," "stove," "yacht"; others from the Persian, "shawl"; others from the Arabic, "shrub" (a drink), "sofa"; others from the Chinese, "tea"; others from the Celtic, "bog," "lad"; others from the Old Norse, "call," "sky"; others from the North American Indian, "squaw."¹

Advantages of Short Words. — Short words save time for both writer and reader, not only because they are short, but also because they diminish the amount of effort required to get at the meaning: they are, as a rule, the familiar names of familiar things or of familiar ideas; they belong less to literary language than to living speech. In a single instance the gain in time and space may be small; but in a chapter or a volume it is worth while to save one syllable out of twenty, or even out of a hundred. Compare, for example, "anger" with *indignation*, "bloody" with *sanguinary*, "choice" with *election* or *selection*, "dead" with *deceased*, "get" with *procure*, "lift" or "raise" with *elevate*, "old" with *aged* or *ancient*, "read" with *peruse*, "see" with *discern* or *perceive*, "shorten" with *abbreviate*, "teacher" with *educator*, "pay" or "wages" with *remuneration*.

Advantages of Long Words. — Long words are needed for the treatment of many subjects that are remote from ordinary events and simple feelings; and they are

¹ For a discussion of the origin of English words, see Greenough and Kittredge's "Words and their Ways in English Speech."

needed more and more as the conditions of civilization become more complex. The vocabulary of modern politics is full of them: *e.g.* "amendment," "compromise," "constituents," "convention," "election," "enactment," "inauguration," "legislature," "majority," "plurality," "ratification," "representatives," "resolutions." New inventions require new names, and these are often long: *e.g.* "automobile," "graphophone," "megaphone."

One long word is sometimes shorter than an equivalent phrase made up of short words, not only because it may have fewer syllables, but also because its meaning may be caught before the whole word is pronounced. "Constitute," for example, is shorter than *go to make up*, "inaugurate" than *invest with a new office by solemn rites*, "innumerable" than *too many to be counted*.

In stately compositions in which sound and cadence count for much, long words play an important part, — in the works of Sir Thomas Browne, for example, of Jeremy Taylor, of Dr. Johnson, of Gibbon, of De Quincey, and in the early writings of Ruskin and Macaulay. They are more frequent in Milton than in Chaucer, in Addison's "Vision of Mirza" than in his paper on fans, in Irving's "Westminster Abbey" than in his "John Bull," in Tennyson's "In Memoriam" than in his ballad "The Revenge," in Bryant's "Thanatopsis" than in his "To a Waterfowl."

Big Words. — A writer who uses long words in order to give an air of magnificence to the petty or the mean is in danger of obscuring what might otherwise be clear, of sacrificing sense to sound, of degrading noble language to ignoble ends, or of gratifying a wish to be "funny." "The grandiloquent man," says George Eliot, "is never bent on saying what he feels or what he sees, but on producing a certain effect on his audience."

Big words abound in the second-rate novels and newspapers that are read by so many persons to-day; but they are no new thing, as is evident from a

passage in the introduction to the second series of "The Biglow Papers." "While the schoolmaster," says Lowell, "has been busy starching our language and smoothing it flat with the mangle of a supposed classical authority, the newspaper reporter has been doing even more harm by stretching and swelling it to suit his occasions. A dozen years ago I began a list, which I have added to from time to time, of some of the changes which may be fairly laid at his door. I give a few of them as showing their tendency, all the more dangerous that their effect, like that of some poisons, is insensibly cumulative, and that they are sure at last of effect among a people whose chief reading is the daily paper." Lowell goes on to give the following examples of "the old style and its modern equivalent":—

OLD STYLE

Was hanged.
When the halter was put round
his neck.

A great crowd came to see.

Great fire.
The fire spread.

House burned.
The fire was got under.

Man fell.
A horse and wagon ran against.

The frightened horse.
Sent for the doctor.

NEW STYLE

Was launched into eternity.
When the fatal noose was ad-
justed about the neck of the
unfortunate victim of his own
unbridled passions.
A vast concourse was assembled
to witness.
Disastrous conflagration.
The conflagration extended its
devastating career.
Edifice consumed.
The progress of the devouring
element was arrested.
Individual was precipitated.
A valuable horse attached to
a vehicle driven by J. S., in the
employment of J. B., collided
with.
The infuriated animal.
Called into requisition the ser-
vices of the family physician.

The mayor of the city in a short
speech welcomed.

I shall say a few words.

Began his answer.
Asked him to dine.¹
A bystander advised.

He died.

The chief magistrate of the
metropolis, in well-chosen and
eloquent language, frequently
interrupted by the plaudits of
the surging multitude, officially
tendered the hospitalities.

I shall, with your permission,
beg leave to offer some brief
observations.

Commenced his rejoinder.

Tendered him a banquet.¹

One of those omnipresent char-
acters who, as if in pursuance
of some previous arrangement,
are certain to be encountered
in the vicinity when an acci-
dent occurs, ventured the sug-
gestion.

He deceased, he passed out of
existence, his spirit quitted its
earthly habitation, winged its
way to eternity, shook off its
burden, &c.

Not a few of the expressions classed under "new style" by Lowell in 1867 might have been taken from publica-
tions of to-day, as were most of those so classed in the
following list: —

OLD STYLE

Ball.
Bell.
Clothes.
Corn.
Cows' tails.
Died.
Drink.
Failure.

NEW STYLE

Leathern sphere.
Tintinnabulary summons.
Habiliments.
The yellow cereal.
Bovine continuations.
Entered into rest.
Liquid refreshments.
Financial reverse; pecuniary dis-
aster.

¹ This phrase is not in the first edition (1867).

Father.	Immediate ancestor.
Feet.	Pedal extremities.
Fishing.	Piscatorial sport.
Foot-ball.	Pigskin oval.
Gold or silver.	The yellow or the white metal.
Liar.	Mendacious rogue.
Marriage; married.	Conjugal bond, matrimonial alliance; united in the holy bonds of matrimony.
Nose.	Olfactory [<i>or</i> Nasal] organ.
Paging.	Pagination.
Poverty.	Lack of finances.
Songs.	Vocal recitals.
Theft.	Unfortunate episode.
Almost forgotten.	Sinking into obsolescence.
Burned alive.	Cremated in this holocaust.
Fast train.	Space annihilator.
Given for.	Donated toward the expense of.
Many reporters.	A whole aggregation of newspaper men.
Milk trust.	Lacteal combine.
Poor farmer.	Impecunious agriculturist.
Sharp ears.	Acute auricular faculties.
Announced to speak.	Programmed to orate.
Belonging to youth.	Incident to adolescence.
Carved the turkey.	Dissected the national fowl.
Fond of drink.	Bibulously inclined.
Food and drink.	Sustenance for the inner man.
Four good men.	A noble quartette. ¹
Gets out of.	Alights from.
Play the piano.	Preside at the piano.
Prices greatly reduced.	Prices ground to impalpable nothingness.
The band played.	The orchestra discoursed sweet music.
Didn't come to breakfast.	Didn't put in an appearance [<i>or</i> Failed to materialize] at the morning repast.

¹ See page 88.

Forgetful of the facts.
Uses her voice well.

Oblivious of the circumstances.
Manipulates her vocal organs
skilfully.

He was received with enthusiasm.
This book was written for money.

He was accorded a perfect ovation.
This book was written with a
financial notion in view.

The wedded pair expect to live
in New York.

The united couple anticipate
taking up their residence on
Manhattan Island.

If the object of writing is to convey information clearly and quickly, the superiority of the "old style" over the "new style" is apparent.¹

As between short and long words, choose the kind best adapted to the purpose in hand; avoid big words.

EXERCISE CLXIV

Translate into good everyday English: —

1. Mrs. Blank has come into residence at her town house.
2. He was the recipient of hearty applause.
3. It is impending over the water.
4. He was accelerated to rest with a poker.
5. The feline presents an appearance suggestive of sleep.
6. All must succumb to the mandates of nature.
7. They are members of the tonsorial profession.
8. Shaggy dogs were whining for the mensal remnants.
9. The servants were disembarassing the breakfast-table.
10. Boreas howls with ferocity.
11. It recalls the fabled bovine in the hall of ceramics.
12. Why is matutinal labor always considered so meritorious?
13. Floral tribute.
14. Eventuate into fruition.
15. Canine in the feed-box.
16. Knights of the razor.
17. Nether habiliments.
18. Pedal coverings.
19. Eyes avert their ken.
20. Equine accommodations.
21. Itinerant merchant.
22. Fistic encounter.
23. Director of funerals.
24. Palatial apartments.
25. Pugilistic carnival.
26. Financially unable.
27. Paternal mansion.
28. Performed his ablutions.

¹ See also A. S. Hill's "Our English," pages 128-132.

IV. FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES

It ought to be unnecessary to say that those who write for English-speaking readers should use foreign words and phrases sparingly. As a matter of fact, however, many writers are fond of airing their French or Latin, especially if they have but little.

I

You have magnified a very ordinary friendship into a love affair.

There was no one to make him acquainted with his surroundings.

"You are a prize hog," replied Joe.

He treated her as if she were having a moment of sulkiness which would pout itself away.

Moreover, she was naturally "easy-going."

She was capable of throwing herself upon the spears in a sudden burst of indignation.

It had indeed become a joke in her immediate circle.

The idea of a do-nothing life would have been intolerable to him.

She was devoid of coquetry, but the absence of it seemed to suit her peculiar shy type.

Smoking is forbidden in the lobby.

I sat at a window enjoying the fresh coolness of the evening.

If I had you in town for a season, you would be the rage.

She threw off her depression, and resumed her old, gay, careless, reckless air.

II

You have magnified a very ordinary friendship into an *affaire du cœur*.

There was no one to put him *au fait* with his surroundings.

"You are my *beau idéal* of a hog," replied Joe.

He treated her as if it were a moment of *bouderie* which would pout itself away.

Du reste she was naturally "easy-going."

She was capable of having thrown herself upon the spears in a sudden *élan* of indignation.

It had indeed become a joke in her immediate *entourage*.

The idea of a *far niente* life would have been intolerable to him.

She was devoid of coquetry, but its absence seemed to suit her peculiar *farouche* type.

Smoking is forbidden in the *foyer*.

I sat at a window enjoying the *fraicheur* of the evening.

If I had you in town for a season you would make a *furor*.

She threw off her depression, and the old, gay, *insouciant*, reckless air took its place.

Sainte-Beuve was a distinguished man of letters.

John is a worthless fellow.

She made a little grimace.

Died, in Boston, May 19, Mary Same, born Anaton, widow of Henry Same.

I fear that we cannot find the exact shade.

This summary [*or minute*] filled ten pages.

Her mouth was large, laughing and yet cruel.

At last the dreaded subject came on the carpet [*or came up*].

She spoke in a low, lingering voice.

He limped across the street to the sidewalk.

I should be a kill-joy.

In the foregoing examples, not one of the italicized expressions is in good English use. Those which cannot be exactly translated are too decidedly foreign to be allowable in writings meant for English-speaking readers; the others, from *affaire du cœur* to *trouble-fête*, are in no respect preferable to their English equivalents.

I

At noon she was still in undress.

Her pseudonym is "Ouida."

II

At noon she was still *en déshabille*.

Her *nom de plume* is Ouida.

En déshabille is often used by English-speaking persons, but it is neither good French nor good English; *en déshabillé* is the correct form of the French expression. In France, *nom de plume* in the sense given to it in the last sentence under II is unknown; *nom de guerre* is sometimes seen, but *pseudonyme*, the exact equivalent of the English "pseudonym," is the usual word.

Sainté-Beuve was a distinguished *littérateur*.

John is a *mauvais sujet*.

She made a little *moue*.

Died, in Boston, May 19, Mary Same, *née* Anaton, widow of Henry Same.

I fear that we cannot find the exact *nuance*.

This *précis* filled ten pages.

Her mouth was large, *riant* and yet cruel.

At last the dreaded subject came on the *tapis*.

She spoke in a low *trainant* voice.

He limped across the street to the *trottoir*.

I should be a *trouble-fête*.

I

They carried off the honors in the presence of as choice a company as ever gathered on the Beverly polo grounds.

The senator is suffering from a violent attack of influenza [*or* the grippe, *or* the grip].

These sentences as originally printed in American journals illustrate the danger of using a language which one does not understand: *élite* is properly a noun; "the *la grippe*" is like "the the grippe."

I

To know that the most deadly danger may come to you at any innocent opening naturally tells on the nerves.

Mr. and Mrs. Page were present at the wedding.

The door at the other end opens on the outer air.

Arrive to, *assisted at*, and *gives upon*, as used in the sentences under II, are in accordance with the French idiom; but, half-translated as they are, they are not good English. Other half-translated French expressions frequently met with are the following: *accentuated* in the sense of "sharply-defined"; *commensal* for "table-companion"; *demand* for "ask"; *pronounced* for "prominent," "marked," or "striking"; *resume* for "sum up"; *supreme* for "last"; *corner of the fire* for "chimney-corner." A half-translated German word heard in some parts of Pennsylvania is *dumb* (German *dumm*) in the sense of "stupid."

I

Information on the subject thankfully received.

The burden of proof rests on the affirmative.

II

They carried off the honors in the presence of as *élite* a crowd as Beverly ever mustered on the polo grounds.

The senator is suffering from a violent attack of the *la grippe*.

II

To know that the most deadly danger may *arrive to* you at any innocent opening is a risk which naturally tells upon the nerves.

Mr. and Mrs. Page *assisted at* the ceremony.

The door at the other end *gives upon* the outer air.

II

Information *in re* thankfully received.

The *onus probandi* rests on the affirmative.

On the evils of the corporation
by themselves [*or in itself*],¹ I
have not space to dwell.

The horse-cars run both ways
in my street.

On the evils of the corporation
*per se*¹ I have not space to dwell.

The horse-cars run *pro* and *con*
in my street.

These italicized phrases may or may not be good Latin, but they are not good English. There are, moreover, good English equivalents for them.

Use English expressions rather than foreign ones.

EXERCISE CLXV

In place of each foreign expression, substitute an English equivalent:—

1. *Deo volente*, I shall be with you the day after to-morrow.
2. Mrs. Parnell, *née* O'Shea, is still confined to the house.
3. The lines of her dress were sharply *accentuated*.
4. He had a *pronounced* nose.
5. He sat in the *corner of the fire*.
6. The grocer kept a tiny *pharmacie* in one corner of his shop.
7. His motive was, *sans doute*, a strong one.
8. Where's my *mouchoir*?
9. I have no right to pronounce his *éloge*.
10. Let me say, *en passant*, that I have an opinion.
11. I think you are a little too pretty for a *diplomatiste* [probably for *diplomate*].
12. I shouldn't have thought you would take anything like that *au grand sérieux*.
13. This dress suited her *à merveille*.
14. I was afraid I should be *de trop*.
15. The valuable preface by Gladstone *resumes* in a succinct form the various considerations of Schliemann.
16. I was surprised to see that the window which *gave upon* this balcony was open.
17. The women paid their daintiest *devoirs* to the distinguished guest of the club.
18. *Au contraire*, I believe him to be a very good man.

¹ The use of a foreign phrase makes this sentence ambiguous: it is not clear whether *per se* refers to "evils" or to "corporation."

19. Her *lares* and *penates* are already established at Cumberland Lodge in readiness for her arrival.

20. One of the best *partis* about town is my Lord Howard.

21. He was *demandé* if he continued to hold the same opinion about the petition that he had held.

22. All nature was up and awake, singing a *matinée* of motion, color, and life.

23. The difference between a coffeepot and a teapot is *nil*.

24. "*À bas* the semicolon!" is the sentiment of the committee.

V. GENERAL OR SPECIFIC WORDS?

A general word is a word of wide but indefinite application; it names a large class of objects, acts, or qualities, real or imagined, but it does not point to any one member or part of the class rather than to another. A specific word covers less ground, but is more definite.

Uses of General Words. — If there were no general words, the progress of mankind would be exceedingly slow; for general words serve to classify and sum up knowledge, and thus to store it, as it were, for future use. Without general words, it would often be difficult to put wit or wisdom into portable form. They are the life of many proverbs: *e.g.* "Haste makes waste," "Pride goeth before destruction." Without general words, natural science would be a heap of detached observations, law a pile of unclassified cases, history a mere chronicle of events. If we were unable to arrange books under general heads, — as "History," "Travels," "Literature," — a library would be chaos.

General words are of service to a writer on scientific or philosophical topics who wishes the public to read his works. If such words did not exist, he would be obliged to employ technical terms — terms which, though familiar to specialists, would not be understood by the majority of his readers. By using general words, he may give the public an approximate idea of his views.

General expressions are sometimes more striking than specific ones. Thus, Tennyson says that Enid

daily fronted him [her husband]
In some fresh splendour;

and he makes Guinevere call King Arthur "that passionate perfection": in the poet's hands, the abstractions "splendour" and "perfection" become concrete; Enid wears "splendour" as a dress, King Arthur is "perfection" in the flesh. Steele terms an impudent fellow "my grave Impudence"; Byron calls a "solemn antique gentleman of rhyme" a "sublime mediocrity," and a "budding miss" "half Pertness and half Pout."

Sometimes a general word is better than a specific one because, being vague, it leaves more to the imagination. Wordsworth, for example, wishing to say that the beauty of the morning is to the city what clothes are to a person writes:—

This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning.

The general expression "beauty of the morning" corresponds to the general expression "garment." The particulars that go to make up the beauty of the morning are described in the succeeding lines of the sonnet.

General words are sometimes used by writers who wish, for good reasons, to disarm opposition or to veil unpleasant facts; but too frequently they are a resource for those who try to hide poverty of thought in pompous language, to give obscurity an air of cleverness or shallowness the dignity of an oracle, to cover the fact of having said nothing with the appearance of having said much. They abound in "resolutions" of political parties, "appeals" of popular orators, "tributes to the departed worth," second-rate sermons, and school compositions.

Uses of Specific Words.—A writer who aims to fix his reader's attention on a specific object will use a specific

word. If he is writing about horses, he will not call them *quadrupeds*; if about a particular horse, he will name him, or will identify him in some other way. He will not term a piano an *instrument*, a spade an *agricultural implement*, or a gun a *deadly tube*. If he tells a story, he will not speak of his characters as Mr. —, Miss —, Mr. A., Miss B.; he will invent individual names, and thus make his narrative lifelike.

Specific words are often effectively used by poets. For example: —

The day drags through, though storm keeps out the sun. — BYRON.

From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder. — BYRON.

Hedge-cricket sing, and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies. — KEATS.

In these passages, the specific words are much more vivid and effective than general expressions would be: compare “drags through” with *moves slowly through*, “rattling” with *echoing*, “leaps” with *moves*, “treble” with *note*, “whistle” and “twitter” with *sing*.

And, for the winter fireside meet,
Between the andirons' straddling feet,
The mug of cider simmered slow,
The apples sputtered in a row,
And, close at hand, the basket stood
With nuts from brown October's wood. — WHITTIER.

In these lines, “straddling” suggests unmistakably the attitude of the andirons, “simmered” the gentle cooking of the cider on the fire, and “sputtered” the sound of the apples roasting before it.

In the following stanza, almost every word is specific: —

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;

There ! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over. — WORDSWORTH.

Few poems of equal length contain a greater number of specific terms than Browning's "Meeting at Night."

The grey sea and the long black land ;
 And the yellow half-moon large and low ;
 And the startled little waves that leap
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
 And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.
 Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
 And blue spurt of a lighted match,
 And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
 Than the two hearts beating each to each !

Sometimes a specific expression is effectively joined with a general one, as in a sentence in Mr. Kipling's "Jungle Book" : —

The moon was sinking behind the hills, and the lines of trembling monkeys huddled together on the walls and battlements looked like ragged, shaky fringes of things.

"Ragged, shaky fringes" is a specific expression ; "of things" is a general one.

The contrast between specific and general terms is brought out in the following examples : —

I

The sloop Alice weighed anchor, set all sail, and stood out to sea.

II

The vessel took in her anchor, spread her sails, and directed her course toward the open sea.

It is not any vessel, but the "sloop Alice," that is leaving the harbor. "Weighed anchor," "set all sail," and "stood out to sea" are preferable to the corresponding

expressions given under II, not only because they are more specific, but also because their individuality is strengthened by our associations with them : they smell of the sea.

I

At last her father's prow put
out to sea.

II

At last her father *took a voyage*
to sea.

The line under I, as finally written by Byron, is obviously much superior to that under II (which was his first draft), not only because it is more euphonious, but also because it presents the idea more vividly.

I

The guards hopped down from
the first car, and fell into line
along the entire train.

II

The guards hopped down from
the first car, and *got* in line along
the entire train.

In the long line of pale azure
near the horizon you are likely
to see a single white ship glim-
mering through the haze.

Near the horizon, in the long
line of pale azure, you are likely
to see a single white ship *visible* in
the haze.

"What do you say to that?"
cried Jules, as he took a big
mouthful of his pear.

"What do you say to that?"
cried Jules, as he took a big
mouthful of his *fruit*.

The sentences under II exemplify the common fault of using a general term where a specific one would bring out the exact shade of meaning.¹

As a rule, prefer specific to general words.

EXERCISE CLXVI

Point out any general terms that are effectively used : —

1. The splendour falls on castle walls. — TENNYSON.
2. On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full. — TENNYSON.
3. The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ;
Touch'd ; and I knew no more. — TENNYSON.
4. The maiden splendours of the morning star
Shook in the stedfast blue. — TENNYSON.

¹ For a fuller treatment of this subject, see A. S. Hill's "Principles of Rhetoric," revised edition, pages 105-111.

5. Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity. — **SHELLEY.**
6. But she —
The glory of life, the beauty of the world,
The splendour of heaven
. that's fast dying while we talk. — **BROWNING.**

EXERCISE CLXVII

Point out any specific terms that are effectively used : —

1. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley, or rather lap of land, among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook glides through it, with just murmur enough to lull one to repose; and the occasional whistle of a quail, or tapping of a woodpecker, is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquillity. — **IRVING.**

2. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so; one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the wall, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep — with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk, doing a good business in watermelon rinds and seeds; two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee"; a pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone-paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them; the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away on the other side; the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one. Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote "points"; instantly a negro drayman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice, lifts up the cry, "S-t-e-a-m-boat a-comin'!" and the scene changes! The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving. — **MARK TWAIN.**

3. The twilight swallows the thicket,
 The starlight reveals the ridge;
 The whistle shrills to the picket;
 We are changing guard on the bridge. — KIPLING.

4. The locust by the wall
 Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.
 A single hay-cart down the dusty road
 Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep
 On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,
 Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
 The sheep show white, as if a snow-drift still
 Defied the dog-star. — WHITTIER.

EXERCISE CLXVIII

In place of each italicized expression, substitute a specific word; point out the gain in each case: —

1. He stumbled over Margaret's *machine* and barked his shin against the mud-guard.
2. Will you have some of the *cereal*?
3. In the midst of these encouraging omens, the sun dipped into the sea, illumining, as it fell, a wide reach of the chill and gloomy *element*.
4. The instant a wave lifted itself from the security of the vast depths, the *fluid* was borne away before the tornado in glittering spray.
5. He was called Knighthead; a name that was, in sound at least, indicative of a certain misty obscurity that beset his *superior member*.
6. And sitting on the grass partook
 The fragrant beverage drawn from *China's herb*.

VI. LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE WORDS?

Every day of our lives we all unconsciously express ourselves in figures of speech. We say, for instance, that a man "broods" over his wrongs, "reflects" on a plan, "drives" a bargain, "ruminates" on a subject, "digests" an affront, takes a "degree," "eliminates" a figure, "tastes" the "sweets" of office. We speak of a "soft" voice, a

"sharp" mind, an "uneven" temper, a "wild" idea, a "tame" description, a "striking" remark; of the "voyage" of life, the "ship" of state, the "course" of events, the "flight" of time, "fleecy" clouds.¹ These, and hundreds of expressions like them, are constantly on the lips of persons who never dream that they are talking in what was once poetry. "The coldest word," says Carlyle, "was once a glowing new metaphor, and bold questionable originality. 'Thy very ATTENTION, does it not mean an *attentio*, a STRETCHING-TO?' Fancy that act of the mind, which all were conscious of, which none had yet named, — when this new 'poet' first felt bound and driven to name it! His questionable originality, and new glowing metaphor, was found adoptable, intelligible; and remains our name for it to this day."

Good writers do not make a deliberate choice between a literal and a figurative expression; the choice is usually made for each by his temperament or by circumstances. The thoughts of one man habitually present themselves in plain language, those of another in pictures, the imagination of a third is aroused now and then by something in which he takes a deep interest.

Simile and Metaphor. — In old times, figures of speech were divided into numerous classes bearing names derived from the Latin or the Greek, and representing verbal distinctions that were of more importance then than they are to-day. This terminology has for the most part disappeared; but two or three of the old terms survive in everyday English, and these should be familiar to every student of English literature or writer of English compositions. The most important of these are **SIMILE** and **METAPHOR**.

A simile likens a person or a thing to something of a different class; a metaphor identifies a person or a thing with something of a different class. The two figures differ

¹ Additional examples may be found in Greenough and Kittredge's "Words and their Ways in English Speech."

in form only, the simile expressing fully a resemblance which the metaphor implies. When Byron wrote

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,

he used a simile; when we call a man a wolf in sheep's clothing, we use a metaphor. Sydney Smith, wishing to show the insignificance of Mr. Percival's position in the British ministry, used a metaphor when he wrote, "He is a fly in amber; nobody cares about the fly: the only question is, How the devil did it get there?" If he had written "He is like a fly in amber," he would have expressed his idea in the form of a simile.

Sometimes a metaphor embodied in a single word is more suggestive than it would be if developed at length. For example:—

The streets are dumb with snow.—TENNYSON.

At one stride comes the dark.—COLERIDGE.

The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.—COLERIDGE.

His very presence stunts conversation.—STUDENT'S THEME.

In these passages, metaphors are embodied in "dumb," "stride," "steeped," "stunts."

Sometimes it is advantageous to dwell on a metaphor at some length. For example:—

She was standing alone at this moment as upon a little island of as yet undisturbed seclusion and calm, and she knew very well that outside a perfect sea of good advice would surge round her as soon as she was visible.—MRS. OLIPHANT.

At thirty we are all trying to cut our names in big letters upon the walls of this tenement of life; twenty years later we have carved it, or shut up our jack-knives. Then we are ready to help others, and more anxious not to hinder any, because nobody's elbows are in our way.—O. W. HOLMES.

Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar.—O. W. HOLMES.

The two sections [of the Liberal party] may call themselves by the same name and row in the same boat. But, if so, the boat can never advance, for they are rowing in opposite directions. Until the crew make up their mind towards what point they are to row, their barque can never move. — LORD ROSEBERRY.

The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted, — they have torn me, — and I bleed :
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

— BYRON.

And let our Ship of State to harbor sweep,
Her ports all up, her battle-lanterns lit,
And her leashed thunders gathering for their leap! — LOWELL.

Methought among the lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind. — SHELLEY.

Personification. — Another figure which it is convenient to know by name is PERSONIFICATION, the figure that treats things or abstractions as persons—that is, personifies them. In “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” the abstract qualities represented as persons (“Hopeful,” “Faithful,” “Worldly Wiseman,” “Great Heart,” “Giant Despair,” “Diffidence,” etc.) are as thoroughly alive as the characters in the best novels.

George Eliot personifies rumor as follows : —

That talkative maiden, Rumor, though in the interest of art she is figured as a youthful winged beauty with flowing garments, soaring above the heads of men, and breathing world-thrilling news through a gracefully-curved trumpet, is in fact a very old maid, who puckers her silly face by the fireside, and really does no more than chirp a wrong guess or a lame story into the ear of a fellow-gossip.

Collins has many personifications in his “Ode to the Passions.” For example : —

Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.

Shelley writes in "Alastor":—

A mighty voice invokes thee! Ruin calls
His brother Death!

Byron has a striking personification in a line of "Childe Harold":—

Red Battle stamps his foot, and nations feel the shock.

Stevenson, who is not addicted to this figure of speech, uses it effectively in the following lines:—

I follow gaily to the fife,
Leave Wisdom bowed above a chart,
And Prudence brawling in the mart,
And dare Misfortune to the knife,
Since I am sworn to live my life.

Bad Figures.—Figures of speech that will not bear examination are in danger of being treated as Lowell, in the introduction to the second series of "The Biglow Papers," treats the following passage from Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire":—

The shadowy phantom of the Republic continued to flit before the eyes of the Cæsar. There was still, he apprehended, a germ of sentiment existing, on which a scion of his own house, or even a stranger, might boldly throw himself and raise the standard of patrician independence.

"Now," says Lowell, "a ghost may haunt a murderer, but hardly, I should think, to scare him with the threat of taking a new lease of its old tenement. And fancy the scion of a house in the act of *throwing itself* upon a *germ of sentiment* to raise a standard! I am glad, since we have so much in the same kind to answer for, that this bit of horticultural rhetoric is from beyond sea."

Two other examples of bad figures are quoted by Dr. Johnson in his "Life of Addison." The first is from Addison's "Letter from Italy":—

I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a nobler strain.¹

"To *bridle a goddess*," roars the old Doctor, "is no very delicate idea; but why must she be *bridled*? because she *longs to launch*; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle*: and whither will she *launch*? into a *nobler strain*. She is in the first line a *horse*, in the second a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse* or his *boat* from *singing*."

Johnson's second example is from Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard": —

The well-sung woes shall soothe my [pensive] ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.¹

"Perhaps," adds Johnson, "*woes* may be *painted*; but they are surely not *painted* by being *well-sung*: it is not easy to paint in song, or to sing in colours."

Other failures in the use of metaphors come from less distinguished writers: —

He took the stump, platform in hand.

Under this religious trait is an undercurrent of keen, dry humor cropping out occasionally and flavoring his talk.

We must bring the viper to his knees and force him to apologize.

Mrs. Traff and her eldest flower took up the thread of life once more.

The revival of learning in Italy first woke the germs of that harmony which later blossomed into Elizabethan literature.

The Bible needs no smoothing-iron to make it palatable to delicate ears.

We see now that old war-horse of the Democracy waving his hand from the deck of the sinking ship.

The meeting was intended to signify the unity and cohesion of both wings of the party, who had fought shoulder to shoulder for many years past.

In these examples, the so-called figures of speech are not figures in any just sense.

¹ Johnson apparently quoted from memory, for the lines as he gives them differ slightly from the original.

What Figures may do. — If the object of writing is to convey a thought from one mind to another, the only reason for using figurative language is that it explains, illustrates, or enforces the thought. Usually it serves one of these purposes, not directly, but by suggestion through the association of ideas.

A good figure springs naturally out of the subject which it illustrates ; it is not dragged into the text by the head and shoulders. It is not an end in itself ; it is a means to the general end in view. In so far as it enables the reader to see more clearly or to feel more strongly what the writer sees or feels, it is useful ; in so far as it does not, it either interrupts or obscures.

A figure, then, like other things in this world, may be good in one place and bad in another. It is good or bad according as it is or is not harmonious with the tone and the spirit of the context. If subject and treatment are homely, it will be homely, — unless, indeed, the writer wishes to lift the reader's thoughts for a moment ; if subject and treatment are on a high plane, it will naturally be poetical. A good figure, to borrow Emerson's words about a good quotation, "illuminates the page."

If you use a figure of speech, be sure that it is a good one.

EXERCISE CLXIX

Let each pupil bring to the class an example of the simile, of the metaphor, and of personification.

EXERCISE CLXX

Show why each figure of speech is effective : —

1. Priscilla was only a leaf floating on the dark current of events.
— HAWTHORNE.

2. There is an immense number of books that are stagnant fens of literature which can produce nothing but intellectual malaria. — LORD ROSEBERY.

3. The unwonted lines which momentary passion had ruled in Mr. Pickwick's clear and open brow, gradually melted away, as his young friend spoke, like the marks of a black-lead pencil beneath the softening influence of India rubber. — DICKENS.

4. What was originally a mere intellectual hobby becomes a veritable Pegasus of culture. — STUDENT'S THEME.

5. Weariness

Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth
Finds the down pillow hard. — SHAKSPERE.¹

6. The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark. — LONGFELLOW.

7. And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.
— WORDSWORTH.

8. Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other² in passing,
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;
So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak one another,²
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.
— LONGFELLOW.

9. Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away. — TENNYSON.

EXERCISE CLXXI

Show why each would-be figure of speech will not bear examination : —

1. Carlo received severe injuries at the hands of a bull-dog.
2. Each of us is an active member of the mosaic of the world.
3. I went through a short dose of the Boston public schools.
4. Once the boy put on his boots, like any other unripe donkey, to run away from home.
5. Such literary lights as Longfellow and Emerson gathered round the old stove.

¹ Cymbeline, iii. 6.

² See page 123.

6. I have in mind a story the bare outlines or rather the kernel of which occurred to me last summer.

7. I might treat Southey and Keats together as hangers-on of these two real fountains of poetry.

8. The whole poem breathes with that spiritual touch¹ Wordsworth imparted to his best work.

9. The American absorbs the news from the headlines, and he rams it home with a sprinkling from the editorial columns.

10. The germ of the problem was sown by the emancipation proclamation, and this germ has grown until the rising tide is at our doors.

11. The eyes of the *vox populi* will be on the game to-day.

12. I cannot understand why some flower of nobility has not fairly flung himself and his hereditary acres at my feet.

13. She is merely a hot-house product forced into an abnormal artificial growth by these fashionable people who must have their lion or the times would be out of joint.

14. The ten-year-old critic is quick to scent out² the core of a moral or intellectual medicine under the sugar coating of many a "story."

15. The story is said to be based on sources which are close to the administration.

¹ What word is omitted?

² See pages 295-298.

CHAPTER IV

PRINCIPLES OF CHOICE

FOR rhetorical purposes, the choice between this and that kind of word, sentence, or paragraph is not a choice between correct and incorrect, but between better and worse. To secure attention, a writer must choose the kind that is adapted both to his ideas and to his probable readers. ADAPTATION is the fundamental principle of all good writing.

Another principle, the principle of VARIETY, is embodied in the advice often given by teachers to pupils in composition,—“Vary the expression.” The best form of speech, if used too often, becomes monotonous; and monotony gradually dulls attention and in course of time kills interest. The most brilliant style, as every reader of Gibbon or of Junius knows, ceases to please when the brilliancy becomes a glare: to a good piece of writing, as to a good picture, shade is as important as light. Variety is the life of style.

In good writing, then, the choice of words is determined by the principle of variety working in harmony with the principle of adaptation. Literary language unrelieved by a colloquial expression soon becomes tiresome; and even colloquial language may, if kept up without a break, fatigue the mind. Pages of long words tire the attention in one way, pages of short words in another. A general remark is more clearly understood and more surely remembered if it is followed by specific instances that present the general idea in a portable form;¹ specific remarks make a

¹ A good example is given in Macaulay's letter, on pages 345-346.

deeper impression if a general remark prepares the way for them or sums them up. A style that is never enlivened by a figure of speech is usually tedious; a style that is all figures is bewildering.

What is true of words is equally true of sentences and of paragraphs. One kind may on the whole be peculiarly adapted to one class of compositions or to one class of writers, another to another; an author who invariably forms sentences or paragraphs in the same way soon falls into a mannerism which, even if it is the mannerism of genius, repels all but his ardent admirers.

To write a single sentence in which the best words shall be in the best places is no slight task; to write a single paragraph that shall be good at all points is far from easy; to write a succession of paragraphs that shall fulfil all the conditions of excellence is what few students of the art of composition can expect to accomplish. It is only by constant practice under intelligent and stimulating criticism, and by familiarity with English literature at its best, that even moderate success can be achieved.

BOOK II—QUALITIES OF EXPRESSION

CHAPTER I

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES DEFINED

THE qualities of expression, though they have not been directly referred to in the discussion of questions relating to paragraphs, sentences, or words, could not be kept out of sight altogether. The way has thus been prepared for the examination of these qualities, which will be called in this book UNITY, CLEARNESS, FORCE, EASE.

UNITY is that quality of expression which makes any piece of writing a composition as distinguished from a mere collection of words. This distinction is well brought out by Ruskin in a passage that treats of composition in a general sense as applying to all the arts : —

Composition means, literally and simply, putting several things together, so as to make *one* thing out of them; the nature and goodness of which they all have a share in producing. Thus a musician composes an air, by putting notes together in certain relations; a poet composes a poem, by putting thoughts and words in pleasant order; and a painter a picture, by putting thoughts, forms, and colours in pleasant order.

In all these cases, observe, an intended unity must be the result of composition. A paviour cannot be said to compose the heap of stones which he empties from his cart, nor the sower the handful of seed which he scatters from his hand. It is the essence of composition that everything should be in a determined place, perform an intended part, and act, in that part, advantageously for everything that is connected with it.¹

¹ Elements of Drawing.

CLEARNESS is that quality of expression which helps the reader to see at once the meaning of each word or group of words in a composition. To be clear, a writer must know exactly what he means to say and must say exactly what he means. He must, moreover, adapt his language to the intelligence of his probable readers and to the amount and the kind of attention they are likely to give. If he does not know who his readers are to be, his safest plan is to follow the advice said to have been given to a young man by Abraham Lincoln: "Speak so that the lowest may understand, and the rest will have no trouble." Clearness varies in degree: it ranges from that quality which implies nothing beyond the absence of obscurity to that positive excellence which sheds light on the subject in hand and has therefore been called LUCIDITY.

FORCE is that quality of expression which awakens the reader's interest, appeals to his emotions or his imagination, or in some other way commands his attention. It gives color and picturesqueness to a description, movement and vigor to a narrative, strength and persuasiveness to an argument. Force varies in degree: it may consist in nothing but a combination of clearness with brevity or in such an arrangement of material as gives prominence to what is most important, or it may be that positive excellence which is the birthright of genius and deserves the name of POWER.

EASE is that quality of expression which facilitates the communication of ideas by making what is written pleasant to read. Ease varies in degree: it may consist in nothing more than the absence of obstacles between writer and reader, or it may be that positive excellence which Dryden refers to when he speaks of "the other harmony of prose."

Since it is impossible, in a book of this size, to do justice to these qualities of expression as they appear in paragraphs or in whole compositions, it will be necessary to devote our

attention chiefly to sentences and their component parts. If, however, these essentials of good composition are secured in sentences, they will to some extent be secured in paragraphs also and in whole compositions. Moreover, since the relation of sentences to paragraphs, and that of paragraphs to the larger divisions of composition, is not unlike that held by words or groups of words to sentences, there should be no difficulty in applying what is said about sentences to paragraphs and to whole compositions.

CHAPTER II

UNITY

I. IMPORTANCE OF UNITY

THE importance of unity can hardly be overestimated. Other qualities are useful to a writer, but this one is essential to the achievement of the highest success.

Every piece of writing that purports to be complete in itself should, whatever its length, its subject-matter, or its purpose, be a unit. A good writer sees his subject as a whole and treats it as a whole: he gives prominence to one idea, and groups other ideas round that one in such a way as to allow to each part the exact amount of space and the exact position it should occupy relatively to every other part and to the whole; if he makes a digression, he distinctly marks it as such. The more complex and varied the material at an author's disposal, the greater the value of unity and the greater the difficulty in securing it; but unity in some degree is within the reach of every one who will work for it.

Unity in expression grows out of unity in thought: a writer who is in the habit of grouping in his mind things that belong together is more likely to form his sentences on a similar principle than one whose mind is a scene of confusion. Whoever, then, would secure unity in his language must have it in his thought.

He who aims at unity will endeavor so to frame his sentences as (1) not to put into one sentence ideas that belong in two or more, or to scatter through two or more sentences ideas that belong in one; and (2) not to confuse his readers by allowing words to hang loose in a sentence,

by changing his point of view without reason, or by treating subordinate ideas as if they were of equal rank with the main idea: he will aim at unity both in substance and in form.

II. UNITY IN POINT OF SUBSTANCE

Too Much in a Sentence. — A sentence that contains more than one leading thought is not a unit in substance.

I

John possessed a small amount of book-learning, but had seen little of the world. He was conceited and arrogant, but withal obsequious to the rich.

II

John had received a small amount of book-learning; but had seen little of the world, and was conceited and arrogant, but withal obsequious before the rich.

The connection of John's book-learning and ignorance of the world with the traits of his personal character is so slight that there is no sufficient reason for putting both sets of ideas into one sentence.

I

Opposite Lilliput was a city which was constantly at war with it. Just before Gulliver arrived, this city had prepared a large fleet, with the express intention of annihilating Lilliput.

II

Opposite Lilliput there was another city, which was constantly at war with them¹ and a large fleet had been prepared, just before Gulliver arrived, by them¹ with the express intention of annihilating Lilliput.

The writer of the sentence under II, by putting into one sentence both what he says about the habitual hostile attitude of the city opposite Lilliput and what he says about the preparations for a specific act of hostility by that city, confuses a general state of feeling with a particular manifestation of it.

I

Swift's ways were coarse and vulgar. He would irritate a man by making fun of him, just for

II

Swift was coarse and very vulgar in his ways and would displease some one by making vile

¹ To what does this pronoun refer ?

the pleasure of putting him under his feet.

fun of him just for the pleasure he got from seeing some one crushed under his foot.

We promote unity by putting Swift's general characteristics into one sentence, and the way in which he sometimes showed them into another.

I

The shepherd promised to bring Rosalind to Orlando the next day. Orlando replied that if this were done—and he doubted very much whether it would be—he was ready to marry Rosalind if she were willing.

II

The shepherd promised to produce Orlando's Rosalind the next day; if such a thing occurred, and Orlando doubted very much that it would occur, Orlando would marry Rosalind, she being willing.

We promote unity by giving one sentence to the shepherd's promise, another to Orlando's reply.

In each of the preceding examples, a skilful writer might have put all that is said into a single sentence that would not have violated the principle of unity. An inexperienced writer, however, is more likely to secure unity if he does not try to get too much into one sentence.

I

(a) Professor Benjamin Owen, who has just died in Michigan, was a native of Sweden, and a composer of some note. He came to America with Ole Bull more than thirty years ago.

II

Professor Benjamin Owen, who has just died in Michigan, was a composer of some note, a native of Sweden, and came to America with Ole Bull over thirty years ago.

(b) Professor Benjamin Owen, the Swedish composer who has just died in Michigan, came to America with Ole Bull more than thirty years ago.

If the writer of the sentence under II meant to emphasize both who Professor Owen was and what he did, he should, as in I (a), have made two sentences. If he

meant to emphasize the fact that Professor Owen came to America with Ole Bull, he should, as in I (*b*), have put that fact into the main clause of his sentence, and should have mentioned incidentally, not only that Professor Owen had just died in Michigan, but also that he was a native of Sweden and was a composer.

I

Iago, thinking that the surest way to take vengeance on Othello was to put a stop to his marriage with Desdemona, persuaded his friend Roderigo to wake up Brabantio on the night fixed for the elopement, and to tell him what was going on. Roderigo roused Brabantio; but it was too late, for Othello was already married.

Far from taking his refusal to heart, within a week he made the acquaintance of a young lady in the neighborhood and proposed to her. The lady accepted him; for, though she had passed what might be called the marriageable age, she wanted to marry for the sake of a home.

In less than a month he was again at sea, with a letter of marque which would open to him the French harbors in all parts of the world. He soon captured in the mouth of the Channel a large vessel which was sailing without a convoy.

II

Iago thought that the surest way to take vengeance on Othello, was to interrupt the marriage between Desdemona and him, and, accordingly, on the night of the elopement, he aroused Brabantio, not himself, but he persuaded Roderigo a friend of his to do it for him, and told him the fact of the elopement; but Iago was too late that time, for Othello was already married.

He did not take his refusal to heart, but within a week, became acquainted with a young lady in the neighborhood, who was past what might be called the marriageable age, but who wanted to marry for the sake of a home, and having proposed to her, was accepted.

He had a letter of marque which would open the French harbors to him in all parts of the world; and in less than a month he was again at sea and had captured a large vessel in the mouth of the channel, which was sailing without a convoy.

Each of the sentences under II is an unsuccessful attempt to tell a long story in one breath.

I

I read Jane's letter to Mrs. Cole; and after she went away I read it again to my mother, for a letter from Jane is such a pleasure to her that she can never hear it often enough. So I knew it could not be far off; and here it is, just under my huswife. Since you are so kind as to wish to hear what she says, I will — But, first of all, I really must, in justice to Jane, apologize for her writing so short a letter—only two pages, you see, hardly two; usually she fills the whole paper, and crosses half.

II

I was reading it to Mrs. Cole, and, since she went away, I was reading it again to my mother, for it is such a pleasure to her—a letter from Jane—that she can never hear it often enough; so I knew it could not be far off, and here it is, only just under my huswife,—and since you are so kind as to wish to hear what she says; but, first of all, I really must, in justice to Jane, apologize for her writing so short a letter, only two pages you see, hardly two, and in general she fills the whole paper and crosses half.

The sentence under II lacks unity in every respect and from every point of view. It fell from the lips of Miss Bates, a character in Jane Austen's "Emma" who is as slipshod in mind as she is tedious and confusing in speech. Such a sentence, by trying to say everything at once, says nothing clearly or effectively: it violates unity of time, of place, of subject, one and all. The amended version is by no means a model; but it could not have been made much better unless it had been so changed as to eliminate Miss Bates's characteristics.

Too Little in a Sentence.—It is an offence against unity to scatter through two or more sentences a thought which belongs in one.

I

Finding in the bed a person whom he supposed to be his brother, he got a pail of water and poured it over the unlucky sleeper.

II

He found a person in the bed and supposed it to be his brother. He accordingly got a pail of water and poured it over the unfortunate sleeper.

In this example, the main fact is that "he" poured a pail of water over a person whom he mistook for his brother. In the passage under II, a part of this fact is in one sentence, a part in another; by putting the two parts into a single sentence, we secure unity.

I

The reported attempt of a New York paper to dissuade parents from sending their sons to Harvard or Yale because the political economy taught in these institutions tends to propagate free-trade doctrines, shows that those who hold the Protectionist, or so-called American, position believe that there can be only one side to the question — their own.

II

The report to the effect that a New York paper sought to dissuade parents from sending their sons to Harvard and Yale because the political Economy taught in these institutions tended¹ to propagate free trade doctrines, is illustrative of the protectionist position. He² here maintains that there can be only one side to the question and that of course is the so called American or Protectionist's side.

The second sentence of the passage under II is evidently intended to be an explanation of the last phrase of the first sentence; but its connection with that phrase is far from clear. By making one sentence out of the two, and by putting what seems to be the author's meaning into plainer language, we secure unity as well as clearness.

EXERCISE CLXXII

Divide each sentence that contains more than one leading thought into two or more sentences each of which shall be a unit; change the phraseology when necessary:—

1. The deceased was aged six years and the funeral was held at his late home yesterday afternoon, Reverend L. D. Ebb officiating.

2. This is only one of Mr. Smith's schemes to become³ the next president, and to accomplish this end he will use almost any means.

¹ See page 187.

² To what does this pronoun refer?

³ Say "for making himself" instead of "to become."

3. The myth on which this story is founded was¹ that the hero Taras, when² upon a voyage of settlement, was saved from shipwreck by a dolphin sent by his³ father Neptune and was borne into safety⁴ to the spot where Tarentum now stands and there out of gratitude for his escape he founded the city.

4. When Mr. Collins heard that Elizabeth was stubborn in disposition he was on the point of refusing to marry her, but Mrs. Bennet did not give him time to say anything but hurried off to persuade Elizabeth to accept him; but Elizabeth would not be persuaded.⁵

5. Shortly afterward he visited⁶ the Bentleys and proposed a second time to Elizabeth and his proposition⁷ was accepted and in a few weeks they were married, and lived a long and happy life together.⁸

6. The Fay house has a good record. In the years gone by it served its country, I believe, by lodging a Revolutionary general⁹; and he, doubtless, found it plenty¹⁰ large enough but, though the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women began work in a way much less pretentious than its name, it was not long in the Fay house before it outgrew it; and two summers ago the house was very much enlarged and improved.¹¹

7. Paul was a canon of Ratisbon at the accession of Henry IV of Germany, and somehow fell¹² under the displeasure of his monarch and was banished from his see.

8. His article "Ordered South," founded on fact (for his health sent him abroad), took him three months to write, for he was still an apprentice, and even when a master craftsman he would write and re-write with laborious patience.

9. These pieces, though very childish, possess a certain fluency and gusto which faintly prefigures the adult genius of Mr. Swinburne, who was just twelve years of age, and about to go to Eton, when they were published.

¹ See pages 183-184.

² See page 333.

³ Whose father?

⁴ "Safely" is simpler than "into safety."

⁵ Get rid of two of the "but's."

⁶ Substitute "while on a visit to" for "he visited."

⁷ See pages 73-74. No noun is needed.

⁸ Get rid of some of the "and's."

⁹ "A general of the Revolution" is better.

¹⁰ See page 255.

¹¹ Out of the second sentence make three, and get rid of two "it's."

¹² Use the present participle, "falling."

EXERCISE CLXXIII

Make out of the sentences in each paragraph a single sentence that shall be a unit: —

1. Yet it must not be imagined that the infantry were demoralized. Stragglers and weaklings there were in plenty. But the mass of the soldiers were determined men.

2. Their responsibility, they said openly, was very great. The child's happiness was wholly in their hands. They would be held accountable if she should form an unfortunate attachment for some ineligible young man who might chance to dine at their table.

3. Though I have the greatest respect for Mrs. Tinsel, she seems to me an affected woman. Perhaps my impression is due to some feminine gossip which I overheard a few days ago.¹

4. Last night I heard an address² by a missionary who has taught in India. He related an incident that illustrates very well the position of women among the Brahmins.

5. Anger had turned to pity in an instant. The desire to kill was gone. The desire to comfort replaced it.

6. I was taking a short cut across one of the tenement districts.³ Dirty, half-clad children were playing on the sidewalks and in the street almost under the feet of the horses.

7. It was only one of my childish impulses to do the romantic.⁴ I left my brothers in the library and crept upstairs to the garret, took the ladder that I found there and climbed on to⁵ the roof. I stood the ladder against the eaves in order to climb up.

8. Unity of composition does not exist under any special dispensation of Providence or accident. Things do not, will not, fall into artistic form — you must mould them.

9. From my earliest recollection it has been my habit to visit Crescent Beach several times every summer. This place has changed during the past ten years more than any other place I know.⁶

¹ Bind the two sentences together by putting "an impression" in apposition with the last clause of the first sentence.

² It is not necessary to mention the "address"; the important thing is that the speaker heard a missionary from India relate a particular incident.

³ Begin thus: "In one of the tenement districts."

⁴ Begin thus: "In one of my childish impulses."

⁵ See page 318.

⁶ Make "Crescent Beach" the subject of the sentence.

III. UNITY IN POINT OF FORM

A sentence may be a unit in substance and yet be so arranged as not to be a unit in form.

Dangling Participles, Adjectives, etc. — Sometimes a sentence lacks unity of form because it contains a participle, an adjective, or some other word that hangs loose in it.

I

In attempting to bring the boat to shore, we overturned it.

II

While attempting to bring the boat to the shore, it was overturned.

In the sentence under II, "attempting" hangs loose; for it has nothing to do with "it" (the boat), with which it seems to be connected. It is, then, — to borrow an apt expression, — a "dangling" participle.

I

Had she acted as the characters in realistic novels act,¹ she might have punished her husband.

II

Taking her from the realistic point of view, she might have punished her husband.

In the sentence under II, "taking" seems to belong with "she," but the sense shows that it does not.

I

Brought up as she was with her two cousins, she was continually reminded by her Aunt Norris of the difference between their position and hers, and of her good fortune in being a member of such a family.

II

Brought up as she was with her two cousins, her Aunt Norris continually reminded her of the difference between their positions and her good fortune in being in such a family.

In the sentence under II, "brought up" hangs loose; for, though it seems to belong with "Aunt Norris," it really belongs with a nominative pronoun implied in "her."

¹ This is a guess at the meaning of the phrase under II.

I

He was so impetuous in his schemes, as well as so skilful and daring, that in each new adventure which proved successful he found an incentive to further speculation.

II

Impetuous in his schemes, as well as skilful and daring, each new adventure, when successful, became at once the incentive for further speculation.

In the sentence under II, "impetuous" belongs with no word that is expressed.

I

We deliberately suppress mathematics by trying [*or* when we try] to induce an equal fondness for Latin.

II

Mathematics is deliberately suppressed in trying to induce an equal fondness for Latin.

Mathematics is deliberately suppressed in the effort to induce an equal fondness for Latin.

The sentence under II exemplifies the common fault of coupling a verbal form in "-ing" with a passive verb. "Trying" has no reference to anything in the sentence: it is impossible to tell who is trying.

EXERCISE CLXXIV

Rewrite each sentence in such a way as to rid it of any "dangling" word : —

1. Being such a queer sort of man, the simple village folk began to say queer things about him.

2. While sitting before the hearth, downcast and gloomy at his loss, Eppie, attracted by the glow of the fire, crawled in and lay down before the fire.

3. It might be that, refusing to render such obedience, her aunt and her uncle might tell her that there could be no longer shelter for her in that house.

4. Looking round with those bewildered orbs, all this appeared luxury to the wanderer.

5. Since sending you our last prospectus, it has been demonstrated that this company is operating upon a firm and stable basis.

6. The meaning is obscured by using unnecessary words.
7. While asleep, the Lilliputians discover him and bind him with numberless fine threads.
8. Being a woman, whose ways are unaccountable, the older man took no notice of her. But being a young woman, and a pretty one, Stephen was angry.¹
9. By dropping me a postal² I will³ be pleased to call upon you and⁴ furnish you any further information you may desire.
10. There was nothing to see, and, having reflected, nothing to do.

Change in Point of View.—Sometimes a sentence lacks unity of form because, by an unnecessary change of subject, it forces the reader, or seems to force him, to change his point of view.⁵

I

Allston, though usually regarded as a painter only, was a man of more than one gift.

II

Although we think of Allston only⁶ as a painter, he was a man of more than one gift.

The sentence under I is preferable to that under II because it keeps "Allston" as the subject throughout.

I

We climbed higher, until we reached a small inn.

As I came home by Holmes Field, I was struck by the view of the field in the darkness.

Though Victor Hugo was a man of violent likes and dislikes, and though he tried to inflame the world with his hatred and persecution of Louis Napoleon, he was, as I think his readers will admit, a man of justice, a man who said only what he believed

II

We climbed higher until a small inn was reached.

As I came home by Holmes Field, the view of the field in the darkness struck me.

While⁷ Victor Hugo was a man of violent likes and dislikes, and while⁷ he tried to inflame the world with his hatred and persecution of Louis Napoleon, I think his readers will grant that he was a man of justice, a man who said only what he believed,

¹ Does this passage violate unity in more than one way?

² See page 104.

³ See page 159.

⁴ What word is omitted?

⁵ See pages 359-361.

⁶ See page 291.

⁷ See page 334.

and who tried to make his beliefs right and true.

The "Herald" says that the strikes were opposed by workingmen of American descent, and were carried on principally by foreigners.

She was a very little child, but she had brought the essence of all that is good and true and beautiful into the life of this lonely man.

We improve the first sentence under II by keeping to "we" as the subject, the second by keeping to "I," the third by keeping to "Victor Hugo" or "he," the fourth by keeping to "strikes," the fifth by keeping to "she."

I

Darcy, without the slightest doubt that his great wealth was an inducement to marriage which no young lady would resist, approached Miss Bennet as if he were making a great sacrifice.

II

Without the slightest doubt but that he would be accepted, and that his great wealth would be an inducement which no young lady would refuse, Darcy approached Miss Bennet as if a great sacrifice was² being made upon his part.

The sentence under II suffers not only from redundancy, weakness, and clumsiness, but also from a lack of unity caused by a change of subject in the "as if" clause. Up to that point, the writer, by making "Darcy" the principal subject, has kept his hero before the reader's mind; but when, after mentioning Miss Bennet, he speaks of a "sacrifice," he leaves one uncertain who is to make it. When the reader reaches "his," he finds out that Darcy is to make the sacrifice; but in consequence of his momentary perplexity he does not instantly get the idea of the sentence as a whole.

¹ See page 94.

² See page 196.

EXERCISE CLXXV

Rewrite each sentence in such a way as to keep one point of view: —

1. From text to peroration, Mr. Blank stuck to his theme, although he spoke without notes, and the subject might easily have led him into adjacent fields. Thus a dangerously old subject was made alive and fresh by simple, consistent, earnest treatment, and a man without great brilliancy of style or striking originality of thought preached a successful sermon.¹

2. When Silas returned to his home, after searching in vain for his gold, seated upon his hearth there was a little girl, whose yellow curls the anxious and near-sighted eyes of Marner mistook at first for the yellow coin² which he had lost.

3. If you move, the picture will be spoiled.

4. In the evening, as his sad thoughts wandered back to Lantern Yard, the thought of his little bags of gold would come to him, and, taking³ the coins from beneath the floor, their very brightness seemed to cheer him and ease his jaded spirits.

5. She never moved a finger to attract any one; but, like Ninon de l'Enclos, all men were attracted to her.

6. The pupil can thus work along new lines,⁴ new and more difficult books can be read.

7. A vandal liquor-dealer has given the house a story's⁵ hoist, and plate-glass windows, filled with black bottles and seductive signs, replace the doorway on the street level.

Subordinate Ideas. — Sometimes a sentence lacks unity of form because it makes a subordinate idea as prominent as the main one.

I

Going nearer, he was astonished to find that the ghost of his father-in-law was wandering restlessly up and down.

II

He went nearer and was astonished to find that the ghost of his father-in-law was restlessly wandering up and down.

¹ Keep "Mr. Blank," or a pronoun referring to him, as the subject of each sentence.

² See page 389.

³ With what is this participle connected ?

⁴ See page 381.

⁵ See page 50.

In this example, the principal idea is expressed by "he was astonished to find," etc. "He went nearer" is subordinate in thought, but not in form; "going nearer" is subordinate in both thought and form.

I

The plan of explaining an elaborate sentence by a diagram, which usually looks like a railway map or a genealogical tree, seems to me more ingenious than useful.

When Orlando, driven from home by the cruelty of his brother, and Rosalind, disguised as a boy and unknown to her fond lover, meet by accident, Orlando admits that he has cut the name of Rosalind in the bark of the trees, and that he is the author of the verses hanging upon their boughs.

II

An elaborate sentence when expressed by a diagram presents an appearance suggestive of a railway map or a genealogical tree and the system seems to me more ingenious than useful.

Orlando, driven from home by the cruelty of his brother and Rosalind disguised as a boy and unknown to her fond lover meet by accident and Orlando acknowledges the authorship of the verses hung upon the boughs and that he has cut the name of Rosalind upon the bark of the trees.

In each of the sentences under II, a subordinate idea is expressed as if it were of equal importance with the main idea. In the amended sentences, that which is subordinate in thought is subordinate in form.

EXERCISE CLXXVI

Rewrite each sentence in such a way as to make any subordinate thought subordinate in form :—

1. A young lady entered cheerfully and took a seat in front of me; ¹ but within less than half an hour she fainted in consequence of the excessive heat.

2. Mrs. Bennet was disgusted with her daughter and called her a wilful girl ² who wanted to have her own way, ² to which Mr. Collins

¹ Begin thus: "A young lady who."

² What is the difference between "a wilful girl" and one who wants "to have her own way"?

showed that he did have some sense by observing that, if she were such, he did not know as¹ she would make a suitable wife for a man in his position.²

3. The author more than half intended his theme as a jest, and is very seldom serious in anything he says.³

4. I had been cooped up in the house all the morning, and so⁴ started out in the middle of the afternoon for a walk.

Other Kinds of Incoherence. — Sometimes a sentence lacks unity of form for a reason different from any that has been mentioned.

I

Rosalind carries out her part to the very end,—to the scene in which she declares that she has love “for no woman.”

II

Rosalind carries out her part to the very end making her apparent refusal as to marrying in her reply, “And I no woman.”

In the sentence under II, the connection between what precedes and what follows the word “end” is so obscure as to make the reader uncertain what the sentence means as a whole. By inserting after “end” the phrase “to the scene,” we secure unity as well as clearness.

I

This problem I have tried to solve; but I find that it is one thing to point out a difficulty, another thing to suggest a remedy.

II

This question I have tried to solve, but it is one thing to explain, but it is another thing to suggest a remedy.

It is not easy for a reader of the sentence under II to get hold of the meaning as a whole. By removing the second “but,” and by keeping one point of view, we make the sentence a unit.

¹ See page 325.

² Form this sentence on the plan of that which begins “When Orlando” (page 428).

³ Make the last part of this sentence a relative clause, and put it in its proper place.

⁴ See page 375.

I

For Swift's action in leaving his first church, we can find only mercenary motives [*or* no motives but mercenary ones can be found].

II

When Swift left his first church one can see no other than mercenary motives which should influence him to do so.

The sentence under II lacks unity of form because it is so arranged as to confuse the reader: "when" leads one to expect information about what Swift did at the time of leaving his first church, or about the place he went to afterward, not about his motives for leaving.

I

Darcy could not but¹ notice that she seemed to be a woman of sense, that she impressed others favorably, that, in short, she was one of those rare beings near whom the mind unconsciously delights to linger.

II

Darcy could but¹ notice that she seemed sensible, that she had made a very fair exhibition and impression, in short, that she was one of those mortals who are few to any one individual, and upon whom the mind dwells with pleasure without really thinking, only just wandering about without definite point or purpose.

The sentence under II is "without form and void." It exemplifies the worst sort of writing—that in which the author, having nothing definite to say, pours out a flood of words.

Aim at unity in substance and in form.

¹See pages 302-303.

CHAPTER III

CLEARNESS

I. IMPORTANCE OF CLEARNESS

IF a writer wishes his readers to understand what he says, he should make his sentences mean to them what they mean to him. He should constantly bear in mind that, important as it is for him to have clear ideas and to express them in language that is clear to himself, it is no less important to express them in language that is clear to others. In these days, when readers are so many and leisure is so rare, he should make his meaning so plain that it can be caught at once. He should remember that few persons have either time or inclination to become acquainted with unfamiliar words, to supply omissions, to remove obscurities, or to unravel tangled thoughts.

If he would make what he writes as clear as is possible under the restrictions imposed by the nature of language, he should (1) choose words that express his meaning exactly, (2) use as many words as are needed to convey his meaning but not one word that does not help to convey it, and (3) arrange words, phrases, and clauses in the order in which they may be readily understood.

II. CLEARNESS AS AFFECTED BY CHOICE OF WORDS

Obscure Pronouns. — Obscurity is often caused by the misuse of a pronoun.

I

Down in Blankville there is a
boarding-school for young ladies.
I don't think the young ladies

II

Down in Blankville there is a
boarding-school for young ladies.
I don't think the young ladies

are particularly bold, but anybody might think so if he believed a story told by one of them.

are particularly bold, but one might imagine so from a story told me by one of its scholars.

"Them" is better than "its scholars"; for "them" refers to a word that is close by, whereas "its" refers to one that is far away.

I

After Orlando had wandered several days, carving on the trees love-messages to the daughter of the banished duke, he was obliged to leave Adam and go in search of help; for the old man had become very feeble.

II

After he had wandered several days, carving love-messages on the trees, to the daughter of the banished duke, Adam became so feeble that Orlando was obliged to leave him and go in search of help.

The sentence under II would lead a reader who was not familiar with "As You Like It" to suppose that the man who carved love-messages on the trees was Adam, not Orlando. This obscurity results partly from the failure to keep one point of view.¹

I

The majority [*or* Most] of the old families have sunk into genteel poverty, but a few still cling to their wide-fronted houses.

II

A few old families still cling to their wide-fronted homes,² although the majority of them have sunk into genteel poverty.

The heart of Orlando must have throbbed with joy at his companion's generosity in offering him his purse and telling him to use it to supply his wants.

The heart of Orlando must have throbbed with joy at the generous offer of his companion to take his purse and use it to supply his wants.

In each of the sentences under II, the meaning is rendered obscure by the use of an ambiguous pronoun.

I

"The Fountain" describes a meeting of friends at [*or* near] a fountain, and repeats their talk about it.

II

"The Fountain" describes a meeting of friends at its edge and their talk about it.

¹ See page 425.

² See page 88.

In the sentence under II, "its" and "it" refer grammatically to the title of Wordsworth's poem, but really to the fountain itself.

I

I was so much frightened by my novel-reading propensities that I resolved [*or* Frightened by my novel-reading propensities, I resolved] not to look into a novel for a year.

II

I was frightened at my novel-reading propensities, and resolved not to look into one for a year.

The author of the sentence under II tried to make the pronoun "one" represent a part of a word, — an offence against clearness as well as against correctness.

I

Portia, by showing that the bond does not say that the Jew may take a drop of blood with the pound of flesh, raises a difficulty which Shylock is unable to overcome.

II

Portia shows that the bond does not say he can¹ take a drop of blood with it, and the Jew is unable to get around it.

In the sentence under II, the first "it" refers apparently to "bond," but really to the "pound of flesh" spoken of in a preceding sentence; the second "it" stands for a word that is not expressed anywhere.

I

Their presence makes all the deeper [*or* deepens] the solitude of him who vainly looks into their faces for sympathy.

II

Their presence makes his solitude all the deeper who looks in vain into their faces for sympathy.

In the sentence under II, "who" has no grammatical antecedent; the real antecedent is hidden in "his," — an archaism allowable in verse, but to be avoided in prose.

¹ See pages 154-157.

I

When the ceremonies were over, General Harrison and Governor Hovey were loudly cheered, — a demonstration which was renewed as they left the Opera House.

II

After the ceremonies were over, General Harrison and Governor Hovey were loudly cheered, which was renewed as they left the Opera House.

In the sentence under II, "which" refers to a noun implied in "were loudly cheered"; the insertion of the words "a demonstration" makes the meaning much clearer. A relative pronoun should point immediately and unmistakably to its antecedent. When the antecedent consists of several words, clearness may require that it should be followed by a word or a short phrase in which the meaning of what precedes is summed up; when the antecedent is so far off as to be obscure, it should be repeated.

I

The New York "Daily," in an article of pretended news which has been telegraphed over the country as true, says that the collector was "surprised."

II

The New York "Daily" in an article of pretended news, which has been telegraphed over the country as such, states¹ that the collector was "surprised."

A reader of the sentence under II might at first glance believe that "such" stands for "pretended news." In the amended version, the difficulty is removed by the substitution of "true" for "such."

I

He does not love Cecilie, does not even hate Major Lovers; but he feels called upon to rescue the former, and can do this only by killing the latter.

II

He does not love Cecilie, does not even hate Major Lovers, but he feels called upon to rescue the one, and this can only be done by killing the other.

A recompense in money was refused by old Jopson and his cherry-cheeked daughter; a kiss paid the latter, and a hearty shake of the hand the former.

A recompense in money was refused by old Jopson and his cherry-cheeked daughter; a kiss paid the one, and a hearty shake of the hand the other.

¹ See page 94.

Some grammarians hold that, in a sentence in which "the one" and "the other" occur, "the one" refers to the person or the thing named first, "the other" to the person or the thing named last; others hold the opposite opinion. This difference in doctrine leads to a corresponding difference in practice, as exemplified in the sentences under II. In consequence of this difference, a reader may be uncertain which of two persons is meant by "the one" and which by "the other." Since usage is divided, the safe course for a writer is to avoid the use of "the one" and "the other" in any case in which he means to designate a definite one (in contradistinction from the other) of the two persons or things spoken of. In such a case, "the former" and "the latter" cannot mislead anybody, and are therefore preferable. Sometimes it may be better not to use any pronoun, but to repeat the noun, as Macaulay, a writer distinguished for clearness, habitually does.

Obscure Nouns, Prepositions, etc. — Obscurity is sometimes caused by the misuse of a noun or some other part of speech.

I

This plant bears many common names, among them "sago palm"; but this is not the plant that produces the useful article called sago.

II

This plant bears many common names, among them "sago palm" but it is not this plant that produces that useful article.

The fault of trying to make "that useful article" stand for "sago" is akin to one already noticed.¹

I

The black hill with the fire at its base, the silence broken only by the crackling of the flames, and, over all, the sky flushed with the sunset, made an impressive scene.

II

The black hill with the fire at its base, the silence, broken only by the crackling of the flames, and above all the sky, flushed with the sunset—made an impressive scene.

¹ See the example beginning "The Fountain," on page 432.

A reader of the sentence under II might understand "above all" to mean "more than all" instead of "over all." This ambiguity might be diminished, but would not be removed, by the insertion of a comma before and one after "above all."

I

Though badly written, the book will not fail of [*or* will secure] a permanent place in literature.

II

The book will not fail of a permanent place in literature, because it is badly written.

The sentence under II leaves the reader in doubt whether the book is to have a permanent place in literature in consequence of the fact that it is badly written or in spite of that fact. The removal of the comma would lessen, but not destroy, the ambiguity.

I

I confess that I did not applaud him, for I was carried away for the moment.

II

I confess that I did not applaud him because I was carried away for the moment.¹

I confess that I did not applaud him: I was carried away for the moment.

Carried away for the moment, I forgot to applaud him.

In the sentence under II, the speaker uses "because" in such a way as to create an ambiguity similar to that in the preceding example. In the first of the amended versions, "for" is less ambiguous than "because"; but it is objectionable because it comes so near another "for." The best course is to omit the connective, with or without a change of order.

I

He went to Holland, the country to which his father had just been appointed minister from the United States.

II

He went to Holland where his father had just been appointed minister from the United States.

¹ Consider the punctuation in this sentence.

In the sentence under II, "where" leads a hasty reader to believe that the appointment was made in Holland.

I

They have sacrificed themselves to theses and examinations; they have given up the large leisure which they might have spent in tranquil and abundant study.

II

They have sacrificed themselves to theses and examinations; they have given up their large leisure for tranquil and abundant study.

The author of the sentence under II uses "for" in such a way as to leave the reader in doubt whether "they" have given up the leisure which they might have devoted to study, or have given up their leisure in order to study.

EXERCISE CLXXVII

Rewrite each sentence in such a way as to remove any obscurity caused by the injudicious choice of a word or a phrase: —

1. The men remain seated while singing, which is led by two choristers.

2. The affectionate heart of the poor Dominie had always reproached him that his negligence in leaving the child in the cave of Frank Kennedy had been the proximate cause of the murder of the one, and the loss of the other.

3. Many a brave soldier was walking half dressed, not having time to put them on.

4. He was a true lover of bear-hunting; which he pursued alone, taking only his dog with him, though it is common for hunters to go in parties to attack this dangerous animal.

5. When the baby is done with the bottle, it must be unscrewed and laid in a cool place under a tap. If the baby does not thrive on fresh milk, it should be boiled.

6. The heliotrope had been Marjory's favorite flower, and since her death not one of them had ever been planted in Will's ground.

7. Though the clothes were much displaced, and the limbs dreadfully fractured, the one seemed the probable, the other the certain, consequences of such a fall.

8. In his attempt to say "mamma" he worked his lips without making any sound, although he really tried to do so.

9. Though Hamilton in theory despised the "Code of Honor," he did not show it in action.

10. I replied to his question without originating any in return, which of course terminates talk.

11. This gentleman may be a good churchman, but his whole¹ sympathies are evidently with her enemies.

12. Next morning, when the farmer approached with a knife and seized the turkey-cock, he understood too well what was coming.

13. The ride back was as disagreeable as it generally is.

14. The napkins are mildewed ; can you remove it ?

15. Ewart, though a good seaman, had not lived upon that element.

16. A multitude of citizens was there, which prevented the Numidians² scaling the walls.

17. I would not eat frogs' legs if I knew it.

III. CLEARNESS AS AFFECTED BY NUMBER OF WORDS

A sentence may be deficient in clearness either because it contains too many words or because it contains too few. Since, however, the presence of unnecessary words is chiefly an offence against force, faults of this class need not be considered here.

Too Few Words or Phrases. — The omission of a word or a phrase is often a cause of obscurity.

I

I'll leave a prescription for a mixture to rub her with.

II

I'll leave a prescription to rub her with.

The author of the sentence under II did not mean that his patient was to be rubbed with a prescription ; but that is what he said.

I

The crime was held in such horror that few ever risked the consequences of detection.

II

The crime was held in such horror that few ever risked the consequences.

He rarely used the elevator till toward the end of his life.

He rarely used the elevator till toward the end.

¹ See page 89.

² See pages 321-324.

To fix the meaning of “consequences” and “end,” it is necessary to insert additional words.

I

There is a difference between the duties of a native and those of a stranger.

II

There is a difference between the duties of a native and a stranger.

The omission of “those of” makes the sentence under II obscure.

I

Those whose faith or whose fanaticism led them to believe themselves soldiers of the Almighty, and who in that dread enlistment feared nothing but to be found unworthy of their calling, — they were gone [*or calling, were gone*].

II

Those whose faith or whose fanaticism led them to believe themselves soldiers of the Almighty, and in that dread enlistment feared nothing but to be found unworthy of their calling, they were gone.

In the absence of “who” after “and,” a reader, though he might perceive that the apparent subject of “feared” (“faith or fanaticism”) makes nonsense, would not at once discover what the real subject is.

I

With all his exuberance of spirits, he was far from being the rake the world imagined.

II

With all his exuberance of spirits, he was far from the rake the world imagined.

I imagine that¹ a lighted city, seen from above, would hardly seem a city.

I imagine a lighted city, from above, would hardly seem a city.

I am glad to see you again, and to learn that you are to be with us a few weeks.

I am glad to see you again and learn that you are to be with us a few weeks.

Each of the sentences under II is susceptible of two interpretations, — an ambiguity which is removed by the insertion of a word.

¹ See page 340.

I

The scenes and incidents of a child's story should be only such as occur in the experience of a child, or such as come easily within the scope of his imagination [*or* such as he can easily imagine].

II

The scenes and incidents of a child's story should be only those that can be duplicated in a child's experience, or easily within the scope of their¹ imagination.

The sentence under II is obscure because of the absence of several necessary words.

I

At last he got out of the car and left [*or* car, leaving] the suspicious-looking white package on the seat.

II

He finally left the car and the suspicious-looking white package on the seat.

The author of the sentence under II does not mean to say that "he" left the car on the seat: he uses "left" in two senses. Sentences like this occur in the works of "humorists," — *e.g.* "He fell into a chair and a fainting-fit at the same time"; but they are not in good taste in serious writing.

I

Round the corner pell-mell they went to the place where the road dives under the railway track, and there they stopped.

II

Round the corner pell-mell they went to where the road dives under the railway track, and stopped.

A first glance at the sentence under II might lead one to think that the road stopped under the railway track.

I

A man who poisons the air by puffing tobacco smoke into it is more contemptible than one who slaps our faces; for² against the smoker we have no redress.

II

A man who poisons the air by puffing tobacco smoke into it is more contemptible than the man who slaps our faces, because² we have no redress.

A hasty reader of the sentence under II might suppose that "our faces" are slapped "because we have no redress."

¹ See page 135.

² See pages 327–328, 436.

EXERCISE CLXXVIII

Supply any words needed to make the meaning plain: —

1. The reading-room is patronized by all ages, especially boys.
2. In the whole house, but two or three rooms were habitable and very poorly furnished.
3. He was not cleanly in his person and notorious for his blunders.
4. Between Roman Catholics and Protestants there is little hostility and sometimes coöperation for a benevolent purpose.
5. The other day as I was walking along the road, I saw a squirrel run up a tree, and started up a loud chipping.
6. The dog submitted to the blows, feeling doubtless a culprit.
7. So on and on we went splashing into basins for the fun of it, and consoling ourselves it would be easy to bring up the canoe the next day.
8. "There is no difference," said the elm, "between the sap in our trunks and the other trees of the forest."
9. The experience of many a teacher shows that this view is not all sentiment, but has much sound reason in it.
10. The sense of smell in a man as compared with a dog sinks into insignificance. His power of hearing is duller than a barn owl.

IV. CLEARNESS AS AFFECTED BY ORDER

Position of Words. — In a language like the English, which has very few inflections, so much depends on position that obscurity is often caused by the misplacement of a word.

I

Ladies' black kid gloves, \$1.25 a pair.

FOR SALE. — A gentleman's handsome blood-bay driving horse, seven years old, sixteen hands high, perfectly sound.

As his nickname — Don Dismallo — would suggest, he was not of a very cheerful disposition.

II

Black ladies' kid gloves \$1.25 a pair.

FOR SALE. — A handsome blood-bay gentleman's driving horse, 7 years old, 16 hands high, perfectly sound.

As his nickname would suggest Don Dismallo he was not of a very cheerful disposition.

Because of the distress of the times, neither Lord Camden himself nor any of his tenants will shoot before the 4th of October.

He feared that he might at any moment find in himself a dagger that had been intended for the acting governor.

Owing to the distress of the times Lord Camden will not shoot himself or any of his tenants before the 4th of October.

He feared that he might find a dagger in him at any moment that had been designed for the acting Governor.

The obscurity in no one of the sentences under II requires explanation.

I

Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the richest of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and was the last survivor.

II

Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the richest and the last survivor of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

In the sentence under II, "richest" belongs with "survivor" in point of grammar, but not in point of sense.

I

Sights and sounds which should be infinitely suggestive make sometimes not [*or fail sometimes to make*] the slightest impression on our minds.

II

Sights and sounds which should be infinitely suggestive sometimes do not make the slightest impression on our minds.

A reader of the sentence under II might be uncertain whether "sometimes" qualifies the expression before it or that after it. A word so placed is said to be in a "squinting" position: it looks two ways at once.

I

Taking a brazen helmet, he placed it on his head.

The readers of Fannie Kemble's "Records" will be interested in the announcement that this famous woman has written a novel.

II

Taking it, he placed upon his head a brazen helmet.

The readers of her Records will be interested by the announcement that Fannie Kemble has written a novel.

His food was often taken away untouched, even after it had been left in his room for hours.

Even after it had been left in his room for hours, his food was often taken away untouched.

In each of the sentences under II, obscurity is caused by the misplacement of a pronoun. Clearness demands that, as a rule, a pronoun should come after the noun which it represents. If, however, a pronoun is separated by only one or two words from the noun it represents, it may come first without causing serious obscurity: *e.g.* "In his childhood Daniel Webster was lazy."

I

I regarded myself as neither rich nor poor.

These plays were written to please, not the common people, but the dissolute court.

They were a family which had the art, not only of accumulating wealth, but of expending it with taste and generosity.

II

I neither regarded myself as rich nor poor.

These plays were written not to please the common people but the dissolute court.

They were a family which not only had the art of accumulating wealth, but of expending it with taste and generosity.

Clearness demands that connectives of the class known to grammarians as "correspondents" (*e.g.* "both . . . and," "either . . . or," "neither . . . nor," "not . . . but," "not only . . . but also") shall stand where they will show at once what words or phrases they connect.

Position of Phrases and Clauses. — Obscurity is often caused by the misplacement of a phrase or a clause.

I

A lady with a Roman nose sat threading a needle.

All yesterday Angelo had run up and down on his naked feet to look for chestnuts.

These shoes had not been two minutes on my feet before Larry, in the shoes which I had worn at

II

A lady sat threading a needle with a Roman nose.

All yesterday Angelo had run up and down to look for chestnuts on his naked feet.

These shoes had not been two minutes on my feet before Larry was carrying a tray of negus

dinner, was carrying a tray of negus across the room.

In "Bonaventure," he has added to his creole sketches a set of beautiful pictures in a new but kindred field.

Amid storms of applause, Mr. Adams was escorted to the chair by Rhett and Williams, both Southerners.

Offences against clearness resembling those in the sentences under II are not uncommon in the work of inexperienced writers.

I

Behind his back, Connor was making vehement signs of disgust at his want of consideration.

For two years, my uncle and I had been planning a visit to Trout Pond.

On pretence of buying a gaudy neckerchief, he called first at the village shop kept by Mrs. Bawtrey, which Jessie had pointed out to him.

On these fine days in May, it is pleasant to stand, like Faust, at a church-door and listen to the roll of an organ.

When he makes out his list of elective courses, he ought to bear in mind that his prescribed studies are important also.

In each of the sentences under II, the author has obscured the meaning by putting at the end a phrase or a clause that belongs at the beginning.

across the room in those which I had worn at dinner.

In "Bonaventure" he has added a set of beautiful pictures in a new but kindred field to his creole sketches.

Mr. Adams was escorted to the chair amid storms of applause by Rhett and Williams, both Southerners.

II

Connor was making vehement signs of disgust at him for his want of consideration behind his back.

My uncle and I had been planning on visiting Trout Pond for two years.

He called first at the village shop kept by Mrs. Bawtrey, which Jessie had pointed out to him, on pretence of buying a gaudy neck-kerchief.

It is pleasant to listen at a church-door, like Faust, and hear the roll of an organ from the door steps on these fine days in May.

He ought to consider prescribed studies as important work which is to be done, when he makes out his list of electives.¹

¹ See page 104.

I

It was at this election that, to the great loss of subsequent historians, Horace Walpole, to whom we have hitherto been indebted for our fullest accounts of parliamentary proceedings, gave up his seat.

II

It was at this election that Horace Walpole, to whom we have hitherto been indebted for our fullest accounts of parliamentary proceedings, to the great loss of subsequent historians, gave up his seat.

In the sentence under II, the phrase "to the great loss of subsequent historians" has a "squinting" position: it may belong either with what precedes or with what follows it.¹ We may remove the obscurity by placing the phrase where it stands in the corrected sentence, or by putting it after "seat"; in the former case the sentence is periodic, in the latter it would be loose.²

I

Darcy said that he had been spoiled by being brought up to believe that there was nothing which he could not get either by his rank or by his money.

II

Darcy said that he had been raised, and spoiled as a child, to believe that there was nothing which he could not get, either by his rank, or his money.

In the sentence under II, "spoiled as a child" stands where it obscures the meaning.

EXERCISE CLXXIX

Rewrite each sentence in the order most conducive to clearness:—

1. In some of these works, a protest is raised against this discussion in the name of peace.

2. Wanted, a youth, to look after a horse, that can drive.

3. To picture plain human nature was Wordsworth's theory in simple everyday words.

4. It was nearly done before Ursula saw it, by Lance's particular wish.

¹ See page 442.

² See page 373.

5. In the military schools, the czar himself kisses the cadets, in full uniform.

6. On the morning of his appointment he informed his pupils of the honor he had received by means of a blackboard in the laboratory.

7. She looked at the girl as she finished her work most severely.

8. One evening John closed "Felix Holt" which he had been reading aloud with a sigh.

9. Where they found them, no one knows, but they found leaders.

10. Anne pondered over that look and the comprehending glance Miss Thorneley gave her brother for long hours.

11. His body is buried with that¹ of his shipmates who went down on the gallant Maine, in the cemetery of Havana.

12. A fine bulldog; eats anything; fond of children.

13. It is the duty of the government to not alone² treat all the citizens in theory alike but to do so in fact.

14 Throughout Europe, at this time, cavalry trusted altogether too much to their clumsy firearms, save when handled by some great natural leader of horse.

15. I understand that it is the proper thing for barbers to talk, while cutting their hair, to persons to whom they have not been introduced.

16. He neither appeared pleased nor surprised at anything he saw.

17. I took the opportunity, in an undertone, to suggest that the motion be adopted.

In the choice, in the number, and in the order of words, aim at clearness.

¹ See pages 431-435.

² See page 292.

CHAPTER IV

FORCE

I. IMPORTANCE OF FORCE

IF a writer's sole purpose is to communicate information or to elucidate an abstruse or a complex matter, he will aim first of all at clearness; but if he wishes to interest his readers or to influence their opinions or their conduct, he will aim at force. To this end, he will often choose a word that suggests an idea rather than one that presents it with precision, a compact expression rather than one that develops his thought at length, a form of speech that is a little unusual rather than one that is commonplace. In such cases, clearness may sometimes seem to be sacrificed to force, but in point of fact it is not; for the word that is forcible though not exact, the expression that is compact though not complete, may be the clearest for the purpose in hand because, by stimulating the reader's attention, it enables him to grasp the meaning at once.

Valuable as force is when controlled by good sense and good taste, it may, if carried to excess, become a hindrance rather than a help to the reader. If every soldier in an army is decorated, a decoration is no longer a mark of distinction; if every expression is equally forcible, nothing stands out from the page. Even Carlyle, powerful as he is at his best, repels some readers and wearies others by his lack of moderation. In his writings, vehemence may be accepted as the natural expression of his force as a man; but a "forcible-feeble" imitation of his manner has a family likeness to Æsop's ass in the lion's skin.

“Forcible-feeble” writers call the mere copying of a thirty-page theme a “monumental work,” and a small meeting “a tremendous gathering” with the “aisles filled to suffocation.” This style of writing is what Emerson had in mind when he wrote as follows, in his lecture entitled “The Superlative”:—

We talk, sometimes, with people whose conversation would lead you to suppose that they had lived in a museum, where all the objects were monsters and extremes. . . . They use the superlative of grammar: “most perfect,” “most exquisite,” “most horrible.” Like the French, they are enchanted, they are desolate, because you have got or have not got a shoe-string or a wafer you happen to want, — not perceiving that superlatives are diminutives, and weaken; that the positive is the sinew of speech, the superlative the fat. . . .

All this comes of poverty. We are unskilful definers. From want of skill to convey quality, we hope to move admiration by quantity. Language should aim to describe the fact. . . . ’Tis very wearisome, this straining talk, these experiences all exquisite, intense and tremendous, — “The best I ever saw”; “I never in my life!”

Within the limits set by the rules of good English and by the obligation to be clear, a writer who wishes to produce an impression on his readers should give as much force to his sentences as is consistent with temperance and good taste. He should (1) choose the word that drives home his meaning, (2) omit every clause, phrase, word, or syllable that does not help to convey his meaning, and (3) so frame every sentence as to fix attention on what deserves distinction.

II. FORCE AS AFFECTED BY CHOICE OF WORDS

A good writer who aims at force will usually prefer short to long words, specific and concrete to general and abstract ones, words that flash an idea on the mind to those that communicate it slowly.¹ He will also be careful to connect the several parts of each sentence in such

¹ See pages 379-407.

a way as to make that which is subordinate in thought subordinate in form and that which is prominent in thought prominent in form.¹ One means of attaining this end is through a wise choice of words that serve as connectives.

Weak Use of Conjunctions.—“And” is frequently, and other conjunctions are sometimes, so used as to stand in the way of force.

I

Salmon and trout abound, — a fact duly appreciated by several of our party.

II

Salmon and trout abound and this fact was duly appreciated by several of our party.

In the sentence under II, the writer treats the two clauses connected by “and” as if they were of equal importance. In the amended version, by omitting “and,” and by putting “a fact” in apposition with the clause “salmon and trout abound,” we throw the emphasis on that clause.

I

Daniel’s father, wishing him to become a minister, sent him to an academy.

II

His father felt that he would² like Daniel to become a minister and sent him to an academy.

The sentence under II lays as much stress on what Daniel’s father felt as on what his feeling led him to do. The amended version emphasizes what he did — the important fact.

I

The Reverend Mr. Collins, having succeeded in obtaining the living which Mr. Darcy’s aunt, Lady Catherine, had offered him, was filled with gratitude to his benefactress and admiration of her.

II

Mr. Collins had succeeded in obtaining the living which Mr. Darcy’s aunt, Lady Catherine, had offered to her rector, and so³ the Rev. Mr. Collins was filled with gratitude to and admiration of his benefactress.

¹ See pages 427–428.

² See page 173.

³ See page 375.

School and college compositions abound with sentences like that under II,—sentences in which two ideas, no matter what their relative importance, are tacked together by means of the convenient “and so.”

The weak construction with “and” is the most common form of a common fault; but it is not the only form.

I

Compelled by necessity, he allowed himself to be enrolled as a guardsman,—the very thing he had said he would not do [*or* would not consent to].

II

He was enrolled as a guard, the very thing he said he would not do,¹ but now necessity compelled him.

The sentence under II lays as much emphasis on the comparatively unimportant fact that “necessity compelled him” as on the important fact that “he was enrolled as a guard.” The amended version gives each fact its due importance.

I

As I was hurrying down School Street, an excited crowd attracted my attention.

II

I was hurrying down School Street when an excited crowd attracted my attention.

The sentence under II is less forcible than that under I because it lays stress on the fact that “I was hurrying down School Street” rather than on the more important fact that “an excited crowd attracted my attention.”

Weak Use of Participles.—An unskilled writer often weakens a sentence by the misuse of a participial phrase.

I

Turning down the shawl, she disclosed a baby's face.

II

She turned the shawl down revealing a baby's face.

The sentence under II makes more of the fact that the shawl was turned down than of the fact that a baby's face was disclosed. The amended version gives emphasis to the more important fact.

¹ Is “do” the right word ?

I

He harnessed his horse with his own hands, and then driving me through the town introduced me to the prominent Republicans.

The author of the sentence under II makes more of the fact that he was taken through the town than of the more important fact that he was introduced to the prominent Republicans. The amended version gives each fact its due importance.

II

He harnessed his horse with his own hands and then took me through the town introducing me to the prominent Republicans.

I

The king of Lilliput applied to Gulliver, who told him to be of good cheer but did not tell him what his plan was.

The participial expression in the sentence under II is equally important with the relative clause, and should therefore be in the same form.

II

The King of Lilliput applied to Gulliver, who told him to be of good cheer, not making known his design.

I

The hero is a Scottish youth who has come to France to seek his fortune.

On this land Elizabeth founded a town, which she at first called Calumet—an Indian name—and afterwards Taunton.

In sentences like these, a relative clause makes a much stronger ending than a participial phrase; for the relative clause combines with the main clause so closely as to show that the two were thought of together by the writer, whereas the participial phrase seems to be an afterthought.

Active or Passive Voice ? — Force is sometimes affected by the choice between the active voice and the passive.

I

This exhibition brought him before the public.

II

By this exhibition he was placed before the public.

If the corporation of Carlingford had not done all that it could to show its respect, it would have been sorry.

This reckless demand of fashion is stripping the woods and fields of one of their chief attractions, and depriving the country of indispensable friends to agriculture.

In each of these examples, the change from the passive to the active voice gives life to the sentence.

I

Great things are preparing.

A fight is making against it.

Many new houses are building in Newtown.

Accounts of what was doing kept coming in.

Congratulations on his engagement are showering upon him.

Passive forms like those given under II have recently, perhaps within a century, come into common use. They have been stigmatized as bad English; but they are found in the works of some good authors, and they are occasionally conducive to clearness. When, however, as in these examples, active forms are so familiar that they may be used without creating obscurity or savoring of affectation, they are preferable to passive forms; for they are less clumsy and more forcible.

Formerly much greater freedom was allowed in the use of active forms. For example:—

I am concerned to find myself obliged, at the opening of this Parliament, to acquaint you that a dangerous conspiracy has been for

If anything more could have been done to show their respect which was not done, the corporation of Carlingford would have been sorry for it.

By this reckless demand of fashion the woods and fields are being stripped of one of their chief attractions, and the country deprived of indispensable friends to agriculture.

II

Great things are being prepared.

There is a fight being made against it.

Many new houses are being built in Newtown just at present.

Accounts of what was being done kept coming in.

Congratulations on his engagement are being showered upon him.

some time formed, and is still carrying on, against my person and government, in favour of a Popish pretender. — GEORGE III.

Tea was carrying round, and Mr. Weston, having said all that he wanted, soon took the opportunity of walking away. — JANE AUSTEN.

The sun . . . had passed his meridian by many hours, the service was performing in the choir, and a few persons entering by the door into that part of the Abbey Church which is so well known by the name of Poets' Corner, proceeded through the unseemly stockade which the chapter have erected, and took their seats.¹ — LORD BEACONSFIELD.

“Carrying on,” “carrying round,” “performing,” as used in these quotations, are now antiquated.

I

I am now being tutored [*or*
now working under a tutor] for
my examinations.

II

I am tutoring now for my ex-
aminations.

In the sentence under II, “tutoring” is objectionable, not only because it is a piece of college slang, but also because it is ambiguous. The boy who says that he is “tutoring” is usually the boy who needs to be tutored. “Being tutored,” on the other hand, is so clumsy that a change of phraseology is desirable.

EXERCISE CLXXX

Strengthen the weak constructions : —

1. Romola was driven almost to despair by the sale of her library, and started to leave Tito.

2. While the convent of the Sisters of Charity was being burned down, the perpetrator of the crime was arrested on the spot.

3. Canton used to be one of the foremost towns of the state producing large supplies of brick.

4. The other day I had a couple of hours' leisure and devoted them to Keats's “Eve of St. Agnes.”

¹ With all Lord Beaconsfield's merits as a writer, he does not always use correct English, as this citation shows.

5. No doubt it will be able to be got rid of by the use of dynamite.
6. The shore makes a sweeping curve to the south, ending in the long, low headland of Bonita.
7. She turned her back upon him, and began a conversation with Mark Roberts.
8. His new house will be putting in order meantime.
9. The cut he received angered him, and with a terrific growl Hero threw himself upon the buzzing saw, as if to hug it.
10. I took a walk late yesterday afternoon and felt for some reason extremely low-spirited.
11. Shakspeare's correct use of law terms was long ago noticed and caused the conjecture that he must have studied in a law office.
12. At six o'clock I could lie still no longer and went up on deck.
13. Their house is situated on a bluff rising from the shore to a height of twenty feet above high-water mark.
14. While the house was being built, Tobias Winship became interested in watching the mixing of mortar.
15. He opened the book, showing me the passage he had marked.
16. Her words were always like ready-made clothes and never fitted individual thoughts.

III. FORCE AS AFFECTED BY NUMBER OF WORDS

Too Many Words. — As has already been intimated, every word that does not help a reader to get at the meaning of a sentence hinders him by wasting his time and his strength.¹ Wordiness is, then, indirectly an offence against clearness; but it is a still more serious offence against force: it weakens even more than it obscures. A diffuse style inevitably lacks force.

I

Eppie had no desire for show.

The house was quickly filled with a gay throng.

She was the child whom old Silas Marner had brought up.

II

Eppie had no desire for show or ostentation.

The house was quickly filled with a gay and jolly throng.

She was the child which² old Silas Marner had reared and brought up.

¹ See page 431.

² See page 125.

The sentences under II exemplify one of the most common forms of redundancy as it appears in school compositions,—that, namely, which consists in coupling a word which in itself says all that is meant with another word of the same, or of similar, meaning.

I

On the other hand, we must admit his sanity.

He was a bright, sober, manly little fellow, and a universal favorite [*or* a favorite with us all].

We enjoy the story until we come to the sad end.

To permit two words to retain the same meaning is a waste.

Meantime, the horses had arrived at the hotel.

It is only a short step from a sincere man to a boor.

Had we read the short essay before writing the long one, we should have known better how to go to work.

Boys who begin life by hiring others to do their thinking for them might as well forego the expense of an education.

However dull an anecdote may be, it is sure to be well received if it has a good point.

II

But, on the other hand, we must admit his sanity.

He was a bright, sober, manly little fellow and a universal favorite with us all.

We enjoy the story until we come to the sad denouement¹ in the end.

To permit two words to retain precisely the same signification is a waste that cannot be afforded.

In the meantime the horses had arrived at the hotel.

There is only the shortest sort of a step between a sincere man and a boor.

We did not, however, read the short essay before writing the long one; but had we done this I think we should have been wiser, as we should have known precisely how to go to work.

If boys start out² in life by hiring other men to do their thinking for them, they might as well give up the expense of an education.

An anecdote may be as dull as you please and yet, if you³ have a good point to it, it is sure to succeed.

¹ See page 391.

² See page 298.

³ See page 425.

Darcy's long silence on that subject came, no doubt, from his pride.

Darcy's peculiar characteristic prevented him from appreciating Elizabeth's worth.

After some man like Darwin [or After some man — Darwin, for instance —] has made a great discovery, it always turns out that other leading men of science were on the verge of finding the same truth.

The effort of explaining why Princeton did not score made me so slow in eating my breakfast [or kept me at my breakfast so long] that it was quite half-past nine when I rose from the table.

Miss Austen begins the book by showing that Catherine, unlike the pattern heroine, is not enchantingly beautiful, or captivating, or insipidly sentimental.

In my room last night, we discussed the question whether Matthew Arnold, when he applied [or in applying] the term "average men" to a class that he despised, misused the good English word "average."

There can be no doubt that the reason for Darcy's long silence upon that subject came from his own pride.

Darcy was surrounded by his peculiar characteristic which prevented him from forming other than a poor estimate of Elizabeth's worth.

After some man like Darwin, for instance, has made a great discovery, it is always the case that many of the other leading scientists have been on the verge of finding the same truth, but without finding it.

The effort of explaining why Princeton did not score, so delayed the rapidity of my execution in regard to the breakfast¹ that it was fully half-past nine when at length I arose² from the table.

Miss Austen commences³ the book by showing how unlike the pattern heroine Catherine is, — that she is not so enchantingly beautiful, or captivating, nor⁴ insipidly sentimental, nor has she any of the characteristics of the ordinary heroine.

In my room last night we discussed the question as to whether or no Matthew Arnold when he applied to a class of men that he looked on with contempt the name "average men" misused a good word of the English language.

¹ See pages 386-390.

² See page 212.

³ See page 226.

⁴ See pages 330-331.

A glance at these examples will show what various forms redundancy takes, and how much is gained in force, as well as in space, by the excision of useless words. Of all the faults of weak writers, none is more common or more serious than the fault of redundancy; of all the merits of strong writers, none is more conspicuous than the merit of making every word tell.

EXERCISE CLXXXI

Strike out redundant words; make other changes when necessary:—

1. To-night there was nobody there.
2. A sort of shudder passed over his face.
3. A bee stung him upon his arm.
4. Jessica, although she was a Jewess, yet she believed in Christianity.
5. I wish to destroy a delusion prevalent in many minds.
6. What he had done in his more youthful and boyish days made no difference to her.
7. His character is as beautiful as well as a strong one.
8. Evangeline nursed him faithfully; but he soon died, leaving her grief-stricken and heart-broken.
9. In one of those quiet and restful valleys lived a well-to-do farmer who with his wife and daughter lived in peace and contentment.
10. There were but two or three rooms that were habitable, and these were very poorly furnished.
11. The property remains intact and uninjured.
12. A conversation which took place between Anna and Benjamin made them life-long friends.
13. We will hear him out to the end.
14. The debate was not so unprofitable as most of such discussion generally is.
15. Darcy is a man who has never in his life done anything, without previously having weighed it carefully in his own mind first.
16. Silas Marner had hoarded and saved a considerable amount of gold.
17. Silas Marner was a peculiar sort of man who always wanted to be by himself and never cared anything whatever in the least to bother with anything not concerning himself.

18. In a short time all gossip stopped entirely.

19. This gold which he received for his work he did not spend save for those necessities which he could not possibly get along without.

20. Although she had grown gray and her hair had faded, yet he remembered her enough to speak to her before he died.

21. How often do we see a man, noble by nature, pulled down and degraded to the level of a beast by the possession of some dread, and¹ who has not the moral courage to face the evil and master it.

22. Sisters of Mercy came daily to administer unto and care for the sick.

IV. FORCE AS AFFECTED BY ORDER

To secure force in a sentence, it is necessary not only to choose the strongest words and to be as concise as is consistent with clearness, but also to arrange words, phrases, and clauses in an order that gives a commanding position to what is most important.

Beginnings and Endings. — In most sentences, the commanding position is either at the beginning or at the end. Unimportant words or phrases are, as a rule, put in the middle of a sentence, unless they serve to prepare the way for the more important.

I

This monster of large frame and bulk, fierce expression, and harsh voice, we almost see before us.

In art, the end does not justify the means.

II

We seem almost to see before us this monster of large frame and bulk, fierce expression and harsh voice.²

The end does not justify the means in art.³

From the point of view of force, the best place for "this monster" and "in art" — the most important words in these sentences — is at the beginning.

I

Darcy's silence on that subject came, no doubt, from his pride.

II

No doubt, Darcy's silence upon that subject came from his pride.

¹ Begin this clause with "which."

² See pages 373-376.

³ See page 444.

Up to the present time, as I have said before, no harm has been done.

Seen from above, a lighted city would, I imagine, hardly seem a city.

As I have said before, up to the present,¹ no harm has been done.

I imagine that a lighted city, seen from above, would hardly seem a city.

A parenthetical expression that is of distinctly secondary importance — like “no doubt,” “as I have said before,” “I imagine” — should be placed where it will be least prominent.

I

In the growing darkness, it is almost impossible to distinguish land from water.

II

It is almost impossible in the growing darkness to distinguish land from water.

Placed at the beginning of the sentence, “In the growing darkness” prepares the mind for the familiar effect of darkness.

I

Last night, after I had gone to bed, a friend rushed into my room with the startling information that a line of would-be ticket-buyers had formed.

II

A friend came rushing to my room last night after I had retired, with the startling information that a line of would-be ticket-buyers had formed.

With an indignant air, he turned towards her his handsome, regular face, splashed with water and crimsoned by his embarrassment.

He turned his handsome, regular face, crimsoned by his embarrassment and splashed by the water, towards her with an indignant air.

In the interest of force as well as of clearness, an expression, whether parenthetical in form or not, should be placed at the beginning of a sentence when its position there helps to impress on the reader the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

I

I listened readily to all unpleasant stories about him; and

II

I listened readily to every unpleasant story about him, and, I

¹ See pages 438-439.

some of them, I am sorry to say, I repeated.

A man who expresses his opinion plainly when he is sure that his sincerity will hurt the feelings of some one, must be a brute.²

am sorry to say, repeated some of them.¹

A man must be a brute to speak his plain opinion, when he is sure that his sincerity will hurt the feelings of some one.²

In the sentences under II, the arrangement is such as to emphasize "some of them" and "some one," phrases not especially worthy of attention. In the sentences under I, the most important words, "repeated" and "brute," are emphasized by being placed at the end.

I

To most of those who have never tried to write a book the amount of labor connected with the task is incomprehensible.

II

The amount of labor which any one writing a book requires is incomprehensible to most people who have never tried to write one.

In the sentence under II, "incomprehensible," the most important word, is in an obscure position; placed at the end of the amended sentence, it counts at its full value. The sentence is also improved by the omission of unnecessary words.

I

Until further notice, this shop will be closed at six P.M.

So steep are the banks of this great river that along its whole length there is scarcely one site for a dwelling.⁵

With more time at their command than they have ever had before, they live for four years at their ease.

II

This shop will be closed at six P.M. until farther³ notice.

There is scarcely a situation⁴ for a dwelling along the whole length of this great river since its abrupt banks render it⁶ impossible.

They live at their ease for four years, with a greater disposal of time at their command than they have ever enjoyed before.

¹ See page 135.

² Which form of this sentence is preferable, the loose or the periodic?

³ See page 267.

⁵ A good example of a periodic sentence.

⁴ See page 81.

⁶ To what does "it" refer?

Under directions from a gentleman who had kindly paid his fare in advance, — for he had no money, — he was waiting for the next inward-bound car.¹

He had no money and was waiting for the next inward-bound car, through the directions of a gentleman who had kindly paid his fare for him in advance.

A study of these examples will show that we gain force in each case by putting the most important clause at the end of the sentence.

I

When a writer, though well acquainted with his subject, does not pay sufficient attention to accuracy of grammar, it is easy for him, as you will see, to say the contrary of what he means.¹

II

You will see how easy it is, even for a writer who is well acquainted with his subject, to say the contrary of what he means when he does not pay sufficient attention to accuracy of grammar.

In the sentence under II, the relation of the clause beginning with "when" to the preceding words is not altogether clear; but the serious offence is that against force. In the amended version, we emphasize the most important part of the sentence, "say the contrary of what he means," by putting it at the end.

I

With his broad sombrero, open shirt, fringed buckskin breeches, high-heeled boots, and heavy spurs, he was a picturesque young fellow.

II

He was a picturesque young fellow with his broad sombrero, open shirt, fringed buckskin breeches, high-heeled boots and heavy spurs.

With the men at quarters and the mouths of the guns showing ominously at the port-holes, the frigate now came tearing along as if she were alive herself and were feeling the fever of the chase.

The frigate now came tearing along as if she were alive herself and was² feeling the fever of the chase, with the men at quarters, and the mouths of the guns showing ominously at the open portholes.

¹ A good example of a periodic sentence.

² See page 196.

The sentences under I are more forcible than those under II because they describe the appearance of the young man and the vessel before bringing them before us. In the first sentence under I as compared with that under II, the periodic is superior to the loose form; in the second sentence, the form partly periodic and partly loose is superior to the form that is wholly loose.¹

I

Accompanied by the best wishes of the family, Dr. Primrose now started with the colt for the fair.

II

Dr. Primrose with the colt, now started for the fair, accompanied by the best wishes of the family.

By placing the participial phrase at the beginning of the sentence, we enable the reader to understand at the outset the circumstances under which Dr. Primrose started for the fair, and we bring the emphatic words to the end of the sentence.

EXERCISE CLXXXII

Reconstruct each sentence in a more forcible order:—

1. X's speech on "Protection" deserves special mention, both for impudence and for perfection as a political harangue.
2. The loss was great not only of public but² private property.
3. They enforce, like most of Wordsworth's poems, a distinct moral.
4. The relations between young men and young women in the West seem shockingly loose to Eastern parents.
5. This particular Scotchman might have been an Englishman just as well, so far as looks went.
6. He was determined not to take offence at his reception, though it was anything but hearty.
7. I returned to my old home after twelve years' absence from Boston.

¹ See pages 373-377.

² Supply an omitted word.

8. Lady Mary and her husband were in full and animated discussion about something or other, with a shoal of unopened letters¹ lying before them and all the newspapers that could be had when Edgar made his appearance.

9. She might have been nineteen and was very pretty, all things considered.

10. I don't see how I shall get through Sunday, knowing what I know.

11. The annexation of Hawaii has increased our ability to handle trade by the acquisition of a suitable coaling station.

12. He took her aside and unfolded to her the folly of his youth with a beating heart.

13. Of course, we cannot fairly judge of the literary life of his day from our present point of view.

14. The character of Cromwell has been written upon by many historians, but Scott's presentation in "Woodstock" is the best, I think.

15. He seemed satisfied, though he had no idea of² what he had eaten.

Antithesis.—Force may sometimes be gained by an arrangement that emphasizes the contrast between two opposing ideas.

I

Under the most trying circumstances, any one could concentrate his attention on "The Heart of Midlothian"; but nothing less than a college examination would make one read "Mansfield Park."

II

Any one could concentrate their³ attention on the "Heart of Midlothian" under the most trying circumstances, but as for "Mansfield Park"—a college examination paper to pass would be the least that would be needed to make one read it.

In the sentence under II, the important words "Heart of Midlothian" and "Mansfield Park" are hidden by other words; in that under I, they are prominent, and are so placed that the contrast between them is emphasized. Words thus contrasted are said to be in **ANTITHESIS**.

¹ See page 405.

² Is "of" needed?

³ See pages 135-136.

The best way of learning how to apply the principle of antithesis effectively is to study its application in the works of good authors. For example :—

Though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active.—MACAULAY.

You began with betraying the people: you conclude with betraying the king.—JUNIUS.

Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller. . . . If the flights of Dryden . . . are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.—SAMUEL JOHNSON.

The arguments on both sides were invincible. For in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery; but in fact, eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt.—SWIFT.

Lord Byron's verse glows like a flame, consuming everything in its way; Sir Walter Scott's glides like a river,—clear, gentle, harmless.—HAZLITT.

Those are disjointed stones; these are an elaborate and magnificent structure. Those are raw material in its earliest stage; these are co-ordinated, and in co-ordination modified by the hand of a master.—GLADSTONE.

I never could understand why any one should be ashamed to confess his knowledge of what he does know, or his ignorance of what he does not know.—E. A. FREEMAN.

There is no place where the young are more gladly conscious of their youth, or the old better contented with their age.—STEVENSON.

Each of these passages gains in force by an arrangement which makes the words, phrases, or clauses that form one side of the contrast correspond to, or balance, those that form the other side.

Climax. — Force may often be gained by an arrangement that causes a sentence to move from the less to the more effective.

I

He showed much impatience,
and presently lost control of him-
self.

II

He lost control of himself and
showed much impatience.

When we know that a man has “lost control of himself,” we need not be told that he has shown “much impatience.” The sentence under I gives these ideas in the order of their importance. A sentence or a paragraph, whatever its length, that rises in importance of ideas and in effectiveness of expression is said to form a **CLIMAX** (the Greek word for “ladder”).

I

Each leaf stood away from its
neighbor, as in a conventional de-
sign; each was arranged in the
order in which it might have been
left by some too particular old
maid.

II

Each leaf was arranged in the
order in which some too particu-
lar old maid might have left it;
each stood away from its neighbor
as in a conventional design.

After we have been told that the leaves look as if they had been arranged by “some too particular old maid,” we know that the design must be “conventional”; but if we are first told that the design is conventional, and afterward that it is like the work of an old maid, we keep up our interest, for we learn something new as we go along.

I

Evidently this is a painting,
not of a landscape with a tree in
it, but of this particular tree in a
landscape.

II

The painting is evidently this
particular tree in a landscape, not
a landscape with a tree in it.

The sentence under II sins against clearness by placing “evidently,” which is meant to qualify the sentence as a whole, where it seems to qualify the first clause only.¹

¹ See pages 441-443.

It sins more seriously against force by telling what the painting is — the more interesting and important fact — before telling what it is not. The forcible order is usually that which moves from the negative to the positive; but when, as in the following example, a writer wishes to emphasize the negative rather than the positive assertion, the reverse order is preferable: —

“He is a man after all,” thought I; “his Maker’s own truest image, a philanthropic man! — not that steel engine of the Devil’s contrivance, a philanthropist!” — HAWTHORNE.

I

Hazlitt’s essays should be valued, not as steady instruction, but as suggestive points of departure; not as a study-lamp, but as brilliant flashes of light.

II

Hazlitt’s essays should be valued as brilliant flashes of light, not as a study lamp; as suggestive points of departure, not as steady instruction.

The sentence under II is weak in two ways: it puts the positive assertions before the negative, and the figurative expression before the literal. The forcible order is that which moves, not only from the negative to the positive, but from the literal to the figurative.¹

The best way of learning how to apply the principle of climax effectively is to study its application in the works of good authors. For example: —

The secret, so long as it should continue such, kept them within the circle of a spell, a solitude in the midst of men, a remoteness as entire as that of an island in mid-ocean. — HAWTHORNE.

Thus man passes away; his name perishes from record and recollection; his history is as a tale that is told, and his very monument becomes a ruin. — IRVING.

He was made Secretary of the Treasury; and how he fulfilled the duties of such a place at such a time, the whole country perceived with delight, and the whole world saw with admiration. He smote the rock of the national resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of the Public Credit, and it sprung upon its feet. — DANIEL WEBSTER.

¹ See the extract from Macaulay, on pages 345–346.

Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been rescued by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had arisen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God!

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. — MACAULAY.

Each of these passages gains in force by an arrangement which carries the reader onward, step by step, from the less to the more effective. In the passage from Macaulay, the first paragraph presents an excellent example of climax, the second of antithesis.

EXERCISE CLXXXIII

Point out the antitheses and climaxes: —

1. Woman is not a slave but a wise ruler in the household, and¹ not a toy but a being whom all just men respect. — STUDENT'S THEME.

2. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. — MACAULAY.

3. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion. — POE.

4. Where we compared, they were absurd; where we contrasted, they were monstrous. — GEORGE MEREDITH.

5. I have not a thing to say; nothing is of more importance than another; I am flatter than a denial or a pancake; emptier than Judge Park's wig when the head is in it; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it; a cipher, an O! — LAMB.

6. The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the

¹ Is this word necessary?

testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. — NEWMAN.

7. Although an old, consistent exile, the editor of the following pages revisits now and again the city of which he exults to be a native; and there are few things more strange, more painful, or more salutary, than such revisitations. Outside, in foreign spots, he comes by surprise and awakens more attention than he had expected; in his own city, the relation is reversed, and he stands amazed to be so little recollected. Elsewhere he is refreshed to see attractive faces, to remark possible friends; there he scouts the long streets, with a pang at heart, for the faces and friends that are no more. Elsewhere he is delighted with the presence of what is new, there tormented by the absence of what is old. Elsewhere he is content to be his present self; there he is smitten with an equal regret for what he once was and for what he once hoped to be. — STEVENSON.

8. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night — from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight, — from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love — suddenly as from the woods and fields — suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation — suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.¹ — DE QUINCEY.

EXERCISE CLXXXIV

Rewrite each sentence in such a way as to bring out the antithesis plainly : —

1. We had not seen Thoreau's Walden, but the Walden we had seen was worth while.

2. I should prefer heavier furniture, but this just suits Simpson's taste.

3. Meredith constantly adapts his style to his subject, but his reader he assumes to be like himself.

4. What is novel will always please and interest; a merely new thing is often distasteful.

¹ A good example of a sentence that is almost, but not wholly, periodic (see pages 376-377).

5. We must see at the outset that just as Macaulay's style is especially adapted for the essay on Clive, so Carlyle is particularly fitted to consider the career of Johnson.

6. In the little silver jug was cream, milk was in the larger one.

7. We found it easy enough to climb up, but the descent was not so easy.

8. He is said to be rather forbidding to strangers, but it is known that he is very kind to his own family.

EXERCISE CLXXXV

Arrange each sentence in the order of climax : —

1. He trusted that he should conquer by the help of heaven and his powerful right arm.

2. That event would usher in a crisis, a series of crises, and certainly not a lull.

3. He was notable for his moral worth, his patriotism, and his excellent handwriting.

4. Jerome obeyed his mother with the patient obedience of a superior who yields because his opponent is weaker than he and a struggle beneath his dignity, not because he is actually coerced.

5. We have been free from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday ; it is true we have had some chicken-pox and some measles.

In the choice, in the number, and in the order of words, aim at force.

CHAPTER V

EASE

I. IMPORTANCE OF EASE

THE importance of that quality of expression which makes a piece of writing pleasant to read need not be dwelt on. It is this quality which gives preëminence to Dryden, Addison, Goldsmith, Irving, Hawthorne, Thackeray, and Newman as masters of style. These men of genius have the happy faculty of taking the reader from word to word, from sentence to sentence, from paragraph to paragraph, so easily that he finds a pleasure in the printed page not unlike that which he finds in a strain of music or in a beautiful landscape. With such men, ease is in large part the gift of nature, the expression of an attractive personality.

Ease of expression in this its highest form few of us can expect to secure. It will come to us, if it come at all, not as the result of conscious effort (for in language, as in manners, apparent effort is fatal to ease), but as an incidental result of a sincere purpose to express in the best English at our command what we really think and feel. We may, however, remove obstacles that unnecessarily increase the natural difficulties in the use of language as a means of communication: we may (1) avoid disagreeable sounds and clumsy expressions, (2) use as many words as are needed but no more, and (3) arrange words, phrases, and clauses in such a manner that the flow of thought will not be obstructed by offensive peculiarities in expression. We should never be satisfied with a first draft, but should revise and revise, with constant attention to details, until the ear and the taste have been gradually

trained. In the course of time, difficulties that seemed insurmountable will disappear, and smoothness may become a habit.

II. EASE AS AFFECTED BY CHOICE OF WORDS

Harsh Expressions.— Unless a writer wishes to shock, or at least to surprise, his readers, he should as a rule avoid expressions that are disagreeable in sound.

I

He is rather corpulent.

II

He suffers from a tendency to corpulency.

In the sentence under II, the repetition of “-ency” grates on the ear.

I

The streets are paved with an extraordinary want of regularity [or are very irregularly paved.]

Usually, but not always, fine minds are fitly clothed.

Usually I think about this matter without the least success.

II

The streets are extraordinarily irregularly paved.

Certainly fine minds are usually fitly clothed though not always.

I think about this matter usually entirely unsuccessfully.

A writer should be careful not to put two or more adverbs in “-ly” close together.

I

Ghostly regulars seemed to hurry staggering past.

He was constantly planning and revising schemes for the extension of his business.

Nothing would surprise me more than to hear that they are going to be married.

II

Ghostly Regulars seemed hurrying staggering past.

He was constantly planning and revising schemes for enlarging his business.

Nothing would surprise me more than to hear of their being going to be married.

In the sentences under II, the repetition of “ing” is inharmonious.

I

Nature has forceps far more terrible.

I think him the most remarkable pontiff that has darkened God's daylight.

She is the most foolish, most unmusical, of fowls that fly [*or* most unmusical fowl that flies].

II

Nature has far terribler forceps.

I reckon him the remarkablest Pontiff that has darkened God's daylight.

She is the foolishest, unmusicaled of fowls that fly.

The harsh sentences under II come from Carlyle. Those who fall short of Carlyle in originality and in vigor will do well to avoid his harshness.

I

The significance of this will be better understood when it is known that I met the good doctor at his hotel.

Several of the poems in it [*or* in the volume] were the joint work of the authors.

II

The significance of this will be the better understood when it is learned that the writer hereof met the good doctor at his hotel.

Several of the poems therein contained were the joint work of the authors.

"Hereof" and "therein" belong to a class of words that are usual in legal documents or in other kinds of formal writing, but that give an unpleasant stiffness to ordinary prose.

EXERCISE CLXXXVI

Rid these sentences of harsh expressions:—

1. They had the beautifulest horses and the splendidest great dog you ever saw.
2. Therein were mentioned the names of those heroes to whom fortune had been so kind.
3. Constantly remembering the broad branching of the subject must make it interesting.
4. Both attacked the political institutions of the country and made enemies thereby.
5. The foregoing is all that El Paso and the Christian people of that city are entitled to in answer to what I have hereinbefore quoted.
6. They worked equally assiduously.

7. To fully and impartially report ¹ what is done is the duty of the press; it is equally clearly its duty not to try the accused.

8. We aided in humbugging those who were still unsuspecting.

9. One instructor says that he is "possibly involuntarily slightly" more lenient with some students than with others.

10. No large body of men look thitherward for healing.

11. It was fixed upon as the eligiblist course.

12. As the senatorial question approaches solution, it is becoming more puzzling than ever. Representatives are very reticent in expressing their views, and the situation is becoming more complex owing to so many new elements being brought into notice.

13. She had a horse to ride, but no one to ride with her; she had a carriage in which to be driven, but no one to be driven with her, and no special places whither to go.

Repeated Words. — The repetition of a word is useful when it makes a sentence either clearer or smoother.

I

What is true of New York is true of Boston.

The modern rule of reason is replaced by the ancient rule of force.

II

What is true of New York is likewise to be found in Boston.

The modern rule of reason is replaced by the ancient *régime* ² of force.

In each of these examples, the repetition of a word makes an even balance between the two clauses of the sentence, — a great gain to ease as well as to force.³

I

Before the mason had time to ask what was the pleasure of this strange visitor, the visitor asked if he would do a job for him.

II

Before the mason had time to ask what was the pleasure of this strange visitor, this one asked him if he would do a job for him.

The repetition of "visitor" and the omission of "him" make the sentence under II smoother as well as clearer.

I

It is an attempt to show, not that his virtues outweighed his

II

It is an attempt to show not that his virtues outweighed his

¹ See page 292.

² See page 391.

³ See page 463.

faults, but that his faults were the consequences of education.

I have spoken of the Blue Hills alone, not because they afford Boston the only opportunity for a park south of the city, but because they are, it seems to me, of supreme importance.

faults but that the latter were the consequences of education.

I have spoken of the Blue Hills alone, not that they afford Boston the only opportunity south of the city for a park, but because they are, it seems to me, of supreme importance.

In the first of these examples, ease as well as clearness is promoted by the repetition of "his faults," in the second by the repetition of "because."

The repetition of a word is useless, or worse than useless, when it makes a sentence offensive to the ear or the taste of the reader.

I

Darcy's love was rekindled by the sight of her again, and he decided to propose.

II

Darcy's love was again aroused by seeing her again and he decided to propose.

In the sentence under II, the repetition of "again," far from being helpful to the reader, grates on his ear. By substituting "rekindled" for "again aroused," we remove the difficulty.

I

Though she loves the opera, she finds Wagner "rather stupid"; but if she sees that you enjoy him, she admires your taste.

II

She loves the opera but finds Wagner "rather stupid" but if she finds you enjoy his works she admires your taste.

In the sentence under II, the repetition of "find" is inharmonious; that of "but" is also objectionable, not only because it is inharmonious but also because it obscures the meaning. Two "but's" should never be put close together unless the relation of each to the expressions that it connects is perfectly clear, and not even then if the repeated sound is disagreeable; the meaning can always be expressed in some other way.

I

I climbed up the rocky bank, and stretched myself on the ground, which was warm with the sun now shining brightly upon it.

II

I climbed up the rocky bank, stretched myself upon the ground which was warm with the sun which now shone bright.

The sentence under II is clumsy, partly because of the absence of a connective between "climbed" and "stretched," but chiefly because of the repetition of "which." If the second "which" had the same antecedent as the first, the repetition would be unobjectionable.

I

There can be no objection to the process that raises the low and thus destroys the individuality of the baser man; for of such individuality we are well rid.

II

It is not that process that raises the low that can be objected to; for that but destroys the individuality of the baser man and we are well rid of such a characteristic.

The sentence under II has more "that's" than are pleasing. By getting rid of three of them, and by repeating "individuality," we make the sentence more agreeable to the ear as well as clearer.

I

At first he was attracted to Miss Bennet by her marked aversion to him; then he became interested in her; and at last he fell in love.

II

Miss Bennet first attracted his attention first by her marked aversion for him and he was first interested then in love.

In the sentence under II, the repetition of "first" is objectionable, not only because it is offensive to the ear, but also because both the first and the second "first" are in "squinting" positions.¹

I

He challenges any one to meet him, "man to man."

II

He challenges any man to meet him "man to man."

The fact impressed my childish fancy very much, — fascinated it, indeed.

The fact impressed my childish fancy very much; in fact fascinated it.

¹ See page 442.

This help Mr. Kipling refuses; he tells us just enough to arouse our curiosity in his characters, but does not show them to us as living beings.

Every one was drowned except Gulliver, who swam until his strength gave out and he was on the point of sinking.

This help Kipling refuses to us, giving us only enough to arouse our curiosity in his characters, without showing them to us as living characters.

Every one was drowned except Gulliver, who swam about until his strength gave out and he was about to drown.

In each of the sentences under II, a word is used in two senses, — a fault as objectionable from the point of view of ease as from that of clearness.¹

EXERCISE CLXXXVII

Get rid of undesirable repetitions; make desirable repetitions: —

1. If the avocation² of a preacher had not been invented before, it would have to have been hit upon to fit Spurgeon.

2. They are obliged to devote a great part of their time to an uncongenial study, to the neglect of the one which they would take pleasure in pursuing.

3. I hope for one that electric lights will be one of the modern improvements.

4. Shylock holds that his forfeiture holds good, and shows the note, which is acknowledged to be genuine.

5. One went up a great flight of stone steps into one of the immensely high anterooms that one sees in the frontispieces of old plays.

6. At first thought, Silas thought his money had come back.

7. Perhaps the fall of the Carlovingsians furnishes the nearest parallel to that of the Moguls.

8. Though peace was soon concluded between the English and French crowns, it soon became evident that war was inevitable between the two trading companies.

9. These appear as new plays, as well as "As You Like It."

10. To be sure he knew little about them, but that has little to do with opinion at twenty-one.

¹ See page 440.

² See page 73.

11. The charm of these travels is due partly, no doubt, to Swift's pure, plain style, but more, I think, on account of the intense gravity with which Gulliver's adventures are described.

12. But three brushes were taken, but the hunters appear to have had fine sport.

13. "Is criticism a lost art?" is a question often asked by the student comparing¹ the critical writings of to-day with the criticisms of one or two centuries ago.

Clumsy Constructions. — Of two forms of expression that mean the same thing, one may be less clumsy or less harsh than the other.

I

The first thing that strikes one when reading Carlyle is that his style is rugged.

One reads on with the feeling that no prose could be easier reading.

As his thoughts wandered to Silas Marner, he imagined the wealth which that most humble person must have accumulated in fifteen years of hard toil.

II

The first idea that strikes the mind in reading Carlyle concerns itself with the ruggedness of his style.

One reads on with no feeling of anything being capable of having been easier reading in prose.²

As his thoughts wandered to that most humble person, there associated itself in his mind the wealth that Silas Marner must have accumulated in fifteen years of hard toil.

"Concerns itself with the ruggedness of his style," "no feeling of anything being capable of having been easier reading in prose," "there associated itself in his mind," are clumsy, as well as vague, ways of saying what is more simply expressed in the sentences under I. In the second line of the third sentence under II, the use of the expression "that most humble person" before the particular person in mind has been mentioned is a fault similar to that of putting a pronoun before the noun to which it refers.³

¹ See pages 450-451.

² What harsh repetition occurs in this sentence?

³ See page 443.

I

He should beware of asking [or take care not to ask] how it happened.

I told them, as well as I could, that I wished my head set free, and that I was suffering from hunger and thirst.

II

He should beware not to ask how it happened.

I requested them, as best I could, that I wished to have my head freed and that I was suffering from hunger and thirst.

“He should beware not to ask,” “I requested them that I wished,” are clumsy constructions that are not in accordance with the English idiom.

I

We are so tired of plays without ethical motive that we have taken to ethical homilies which are dramatic in nothing but form.

II

Because we were¹ tired of plays without ethical motives, we have taken up ethical homilies having only the form of drama.

The sentence under II sins against ease as well as against clearness, both in the awkward method of connecting the first clause with the second and in the loose attachment of the participial phrase at the end.²

I

He at last devised the scheme of wading over to the island where the enemy lived, and of drawing off their fleet.

He finds himself bound by thousands of threads, and surrounded by little men six inches high.

He finds that he is bound by thousands of threads, and that little men six inches high are all round him.

II

He at last devised the scheme of wading over to the island where the enemy dwelt, and to draw off their fleet.

He finds himself bound by thousands of threads, and that little men six inches high were¹ all around him.

¹ See pages 185-186.

² See pages 450-451.

Eager to travel and to see more of the world, Gulliver sets out on a voyage.

For the first time I read verse not only intelligently but with avidity.

The lack of ease in each of the sentences under II comes from the fact that two expressions which are not in the same construction are treated as if they were.

I

Portia informs him that the property of any man who plots against the life of a citizen is, by the laws of Venice, confiscated.

The sentence under II is deformed by a construction that is not uncommon in the compositions of candidates for admission to college: "whoever" is as uncared for as a "dangling participle."³

And Which. — Among the constructions that jar on a reader's sense of harmony is the use of "and" before a relative clause which it does not connect with another relative clause. In some cases, as has already been noted, this construction is objectionable from a grammatical point of view;⁴ but in one form or another it occurs so often, even in the works of good authors, that it cannot be absolutely condemned. It should, however, be avoided by a writer who studies the comfort of his readers.

I

The grocer who sells a cheap and inferior flavoring extract, which proves unsatisfactory to his customers, is blamed, and he soon finds that his trade is damaged.

II

Portia informs him that whoever plots against the life of any citizen, his property, by the laws of Venice, are² confiscated.

II

The grocer who sells a cheap and inferior flavoring extract and which proves unsatisfactory to his customers,⁵ the blame comes on him and his trade is damaged.

¹ See page 375.

² See page 199.

³ See page 423.

⁴ See page 338.

⁵ What is the predicate of "grocer"?

The principal excellence of Virgil—one which, in my opinion, he possesses beyond all other poets—is tenderness.

The order signed by Mr. Frick, to the effect that men who returned to work would be insured against removal,—an order which was given in the despatches of last night,—is the final peace-offering of the firm to the strikers.

In each of the sentences under II, “and” tries to connect “which” with its antecedent; but it really separates the two. In the last two examples, clearness is promoted by the repetition of the antecedents in a condensed form.

I

(a) The Cotes family is an old and good one, which has long been established in Shropshire, and which has for years been returned to Parliament in the person of one of its members.

(b) The Cotes family is an old and good one, long established in Shropshire, and has for years been returned to Parliament in the person of one of its members.

(c) The Cotes family is an old and good one, long established in Shropshire,—a family which has for years been returned to Parliament in the person of one of its members.

(d) The Cotes family, long established in Shropshire, is an old and good one, which has for years been returned to Parliament in the person of one of its members.

The principal excellence of Virgil and which in my opinion he possesses beyond all¹ poets is tenderness.

The order signed by Mr. Frick to the effect that men returning² to work would be insured against removal, and which was given in the despatches of last night, is the final peace-offering of the firm to the strikers.

II

The Cotes family is an old and good one, long established in Shropshire, and which has for years been returned to Parliament in the person of one of its members.

¹ See page 300.

² See pages 450–451.

³ See page 434.

In the sentence under II, "and" tries to connect a relative clause with a participial phrase. We may remove the difficulty in one of four ways: we may (*a*) turn the participial phrase into a relative clause, — a change that makes the sentence long and heavy, — or (*b*) omit "which" and thus enable "and" to connect "is an old and good one" with "has for years been returned," or (*c*) substitute "a family" for "and," or (*d*) by changing the order and omitting "and," make "one" the direct antecedent of "which," as in (*a*). These changes do not affect the meaning of the sentence as a whole; but they do affect the relative importance of the several facts mentioned.

I

He tells the world of the star which he has discovered, and which he believes will guide the ship of state.

II

He tells the world of the star he has discovered and which he believes will guide the ship of state.

In the sentence under II, "and" may be regarded as a connective between the expressed "which" and an omitted "which" in the preceding clause. Sentences of this class are more frequent in good authors, and therefore less objectionable, than those cited under II in the last two groups of examples; but they should be avoided.

EXERCISE CLXXXVIII

Rid these sentences of clumsy constructions: —

1. The character of Addison is one of pleasure to contemplate.
2. Sharp words had ensued from Joan, and who had offered to leave at once.
3. Whoever wants soft hands or a clear complexion, he and she can have both.
4. He was watching me with his sharp, sleepy eyes, and which always reminded me of a cat shamming sleep.
5. He was not that master of metrical Greek that he was of Latin.

6. We were ushered into a gallery one hundred feet long, and which occupied a great portion of the northern side of the castle.

7. Like many young men coming to the bar, and before they have been tried and found wanting, he flattered himself that he was a fellow of unusual quickness and penetration.

8. I hope for a favorable reply, and in that case please be at the rooms at half after three.¹

9. A New York lady, deeply interested in our work, and who has largely contributed to aid it, has been travelling in Spain for several months.

10. There are excluded, by this rule, all students who entered in advanced standing.

11. I think I am justified, as long as strength and work hold out, to pursue the career I have marked out for myself.

12. It [yellow fever] began with a cold, a hardly perceptible chill, an aching in the head, an apparently insignificant fever, and, a little later, pains in the back ensue.

13. The knowing how to labor expeditiously is valuable.

Translation-English. — In translating from a foreign language into English, a student should take pains to render foreign idioms into English ones, and to follow the English order.

I

Give glory to me, to him, to my children, and to my august wife.

They put to flight and scattered some who were half asleep, and others who were in the act of taking up arms.

The best plan seemed to be to go to Nestor and ask him if he could think of some way of averting destruction from the Greeks.

The old man filled the mixing-bowl with sweet wine for those who were coming; then, pouring it out, he prayed long to Athena.

II

Give me, him, my children, and my august wife, glory.

They put to flight and scattered a part half asleep and others taking up arms.

This plan seemed best, to go to Nestor, if perchance he might arrange some plan that destruction should not come to all the Greeks.

The old man filled the mixing-bowl for those coming with sweet wine, and, pouring it out, prayed much to Athena.

¹ In rewriting this sentence, change the point of view.

I should not wish to see Greece, which is now free, enslaved.

The leaders had gone to rest near the ship, and had fallen into a pleasant sleep.

On their arrival, Alexander spoke to them as follows.

These things, it is said, gave much spirit and courage to the soldiers.

Brave men, when the war is over, lay aside with their arms the hatred which accompanies strife.

After this man had died, Lucius Cæsar, in order to get the utmost advantage from his death, called a council of the people, and delivered a harangue in which he urged them to open the gates; for he hoped much, he said, from the clemency of Cæsar.

Instead of Freedom, I would not wish to see Greece enslaved.

The leaders had gone to rest near the ship merged in pleasing sleep.

And to them, having arrived, Alexander spake as follows.

Thus from all these things, much spirit and courage is said to have possessed the soldiers.

Brave men place with war itself and arms, that hatred of contention.

This man having perished, Lucius Cæsar, that he might get aid to himself from this thing, the people being called together, a council being held, he harangued all that they should open the gates, saying he had great hopes in the clemency of Cæsar.

The best comment on these specimens of students' attempts to translate Cæsar, Cicero, and Homer is a remark in one of Mr. Swinburne's recent essays: "A phrase or a construction which makes very good Latin may make very bad English."

The injurious effects of translating good Latin or Greek into bad English too often appear in "original" compositions.

I

Orlando would marry Rosalind if she were willing.

As their leader was dead, they fled in confusion.

II

Orlando would marry Rosalind, she being willing.

Their leader being dead, they fled in confusion.

The sentences under II show the influence of the Latin ablative absolute.

I

Among the defects of Brown-ing commonly insisted on is his obscurity.

A visit from the east wind, so much dreaded at times, would have been welcome.

Among them was the skeleton of Manon's lover, for whom she had lately wept but whom she was now fast forgetting.

II

Among the commonly insisted upon defects of Browning is his obscurity.

A visit from the at times dreaded east wind would have been welcome.

Among them was the skeleton of Manon's late wept and now being fast forgotten lover.

The sentences under II exemplify the common fault of putting a long adjective phrase before, instead of after, the noun that it qualifies. Such an arrangement is German rather than English.

EXERCISE CLXXXIX

Rewrite each sentence in accordance with the English idiom: —

1. These all differ among themselves in language, customs, and laws.
2. It was work to the leaders to hinder the soldiers pushing on to the front.
3. Of the Lacedæmonians no one fell, but a very great number of the enemy.
4. She is the only brother he has got's wife.
5. It is even more disconnected than the novels we have been speaking of, it being almost impossible to follow what of plot there is.
6. To say this was to range one's self alongside of President Cleveland in a — so far as the Republican party was concerned — decidedly unpopular position.
7. They were walking on real pavements in front of plate-glass-windowed shops.
8. Down over her forehead her hair has a very charming to me, but troublesome to Emily, way of doing just as it pleases.
9. The senator from Illinois seemed to be shocked at my speaking with a feeling of gratification at the flag of what he chooses to call my country being insulted.

10. The desire, also, to perpetuate one's name is natural and laudable, those leaving behind them the most lasting monuments being universally regarded as having lived the most satisfactory and best lives.¹

11. Of breakfast she had been kept by her fears, and of dinner by their sudden reverse, from eating much.

12. He is the woman that takes the swill's boy.

13. Mary sent her cakes of phosphorus paste, which eating, she died.

III. EASE AS AFFECTED BY NUMBER OF WORDS

A sentence may be deficient in ease either because it contains too many words or because it contains too few.

Too Many Words. — For obvious reasons, a writer who aims chiefly at ease need not be so concise as one who aims at force; but every writer should beware of redundancy.

I

In the whole affair, there had doubtless been much that had put it out of the range of things that are subject to ordinary judgment.

"The Fountain" is as characteristic of Wordsworth as are "Two April Mornings" and "Expostulation and Reply," and in almost precisely the same way.

Thackeray certainly admires Swift; but when he asks himself whether he should have liked Swift as a friend, his answer is, "Decidedly not."

In each of these examples, ease, force, and clearness are promoted by the use of fewer words than appear in the sentence under II.

II

There had doubtless been much in the whole affair which had placed it outside the pale of things which are subject to the ordinary judgment of men.

The way in which "the Fountain" is characteristic of Wordsworth is almost precisely the same as the way in which the "Two April Mornings" and "Expostulation and Reply" are characteristic.

Thackeray certainly admires Swift; but when it comes as to whether he would have liked to have had Swift for a friend, he says most decidedly not.

¹ Is there any offensive repetition in this sentence?

Too Few Words. — The omission of words that are needed to make a sentence smooth is a sin against ease.

I

These grounds, as no one can refuse to acknowledge, are sound.

The man who really was in Darcy and constituted his true character, the man who despised his own pride and chafed at the restraint of society, showed himself in his courtship of Elizabeth Bennet.

The reason why animals are the best characters for a fable is that we have no preconceived ideas about them.

So long as farmers do not have as good opportunities to gain a living as those which their fellow-countrymen enjoy, government will not be successful.

In each of these examples, both ease and clearness are promoted by the use of more words than appear in the sentence under II.

II

These grounds no one can refuse to acknowledge sound.

The man that really was in Darcy and his true character which despised his pride and chafed at the restraint of society was displayed in his courtship of Elizabeth Bennet.

The reason of animals being the best personages for a fable is that they suggest no prejudice.

Government will not be successful so long as farmers are not allowed an equal opportunity to gain a living with their fellows.

EXERCISE CXC

Get rid of every expression that interferes with the reader's ease:—

1. He was a man of forty years of age.
2. No other writer unites in himself¹ so many of the characteristics of the age of Elizabeth as does Ben Jonson.
3. The grossness of the past has vanished, to be replaced by the purity of our nineteenth-century poets.
4. Isaac Dun was married June 6, 1877, when Mary Tile of Hanson became his wife.
5. He has the happy gift that to put every one in high spirits he has only to be present.

¹ Express in one word the phrase "unites in himself."

6. Great is the need that parents shall have passed the proper courses, the same that are to be suggested for the child.

7. It is written in complete ignorance of how the affair will turn out.

8. Some persons think that the time spent on the study of English poetry is wasted because the study of it is not productive of results that are practical.

9. Surely it has done no good to express dislike in this manner, and it has done harm in misleading men as to how strong the Faculty felt in the matter.

10. After a long, agonizing struggle he gained the upper hand over his enemy. He continued to use opium all his life—it had become a necessity to him—but it never again gained an ascendancy over him.

11. The other brother, after comforting his sister, goes after them that he may be of what service to them that he can.

12. He had no idea of what he had eaten.

13. The whole question turns on the question as to who wrote the memorandum.

14. The quaint sayings that many of her¹ characters have, could not have been thought by any one else than George Eliot.

EXERCISE CXCI

Supply any words necessary to the reader's ease:—

1. It seemed to me as if she must have known that I had a tenderness for her and were fooling me.

2. I rested after a strife which had issued in a victory whose² meaning was too great to comprehend and enjoy at once.

3. It is consolatory these reams [of paper] are now all ashes and have been received again into the soil.

4. He considered himself of greater importance than his enemies were pleased to attach to him.

5. We walked over to where she had been seated.

6. There can no more exist the "beauty of drudgery" than of treason.³

¹ See pages 442-443.

² See page 127.

³ Is there any unnecessary word in this sentence? If so, get rid of it.

IV. EASE AS AFFECTED BY ORDER

From the point of view of ease, it is especially important for a writer so to construct his sentences as to give his readers as little trouble as possible in getting from word to word and from clause to clause.

Position of Words. — The misplacement of a single word sometimes grates on the ear.

I

It must be our Mr. Elliot; Charles, Anne, must it not? Pray, sir, did you not hear?

Is it not the same with other professions?

II

It must be our Mr. Elliot; Charles, Anne, must not it? Pray, sir, did not you hear?

Is not it the same with other professions?

The sentences under II come from a novel of Jane Austen's, in whose time it was customary to say "must not it?" "did not you?" "is not it?" Nowadays we say "must it not?" "did you not?" "is it not?" Sounds that are agreeable to one generation may be disagreeable to another.

I

The blow had come, and it struck him now as hard as if it had not been expected, — almost harder.

The Reverend Mr. Collins was filled with gratitude to his benefactress and admiration of her.

All have come, like Philadelphia bricks, from a superior sort of clay, and are in process of returning to it.

II

The blow had come, and it struck him now as hard as, almost harder than, if it had not been expected.

The Reverend Mr. Collins was filled with gratitude to and admiration of his benefactress.

All have come from (even as Philadelphia bricks come from),¹ and are in the process of returning to, a superior sort of clay.

In the sentences under II, a disagreeable emphasis is thrown on "as"² and "than,"² "to" and "of," "from" and "to," the words that least deserve distinction. By emphasizing insignificant words, a writer sins not only

¹ See pages 474-476.

² See page 340.

against ease but also against force; for he lays stress on what is least important. When, however, a preposition, or some other little word, is really emphatic, it should be emphasized: *e.g.* "He could not help laughing, partly at, and partly with, his countryman."

I

That is the book which I have
taken a fancy to.

That is all I ask for.

What are you thinking of?

What are you driving at?

II

That is the book to which I
have taken a fancy.

That is all for which I ask.

Of what are you thinking?

At what are you driving?

Some teachers and some text-books maintain that a sentence should never end with a preposition or with any other insignificant word. "A preposition," said a college professor to his class, "is a bad word to end a sentence with." If his practice had squared with his theory, he would have said, "A preposition is a bad word with which to end a sentence"; but his instinct for language was stronger than his doctrine.

From the point of view of ease, the form of the remark as it slipped from the professor's lips is certainly better than the form it would have taken had his sentence been framed in accordance with his theory. That his theory is inconsistent with the practice of good authors might easily be shown by pages of citations. A few instances must suffice:—

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;

It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock

The meat it feeds on. — SHAKSPEARE.¹

Thou art all the comfort

The gods will diet me with. — SHAKSPEARE.²

For the same reason, idiots are still in request in most of the courts of Germany, where there is not a prince of any great magnificence, who has not two or three . . . fools in his retinue, whom the rest of the courtiers are always breaking their jests upon. — ADDISON.

¹ Othello, iii. 3.

² Cymbeline, iii. 4.

This proposal, which she could not avoid considering as perfectly just, was readily agreed to. — GOLDSMITH.

"There is hardly any personal defect," replied Anne, "which an agreeable manner might not gradually reconcile one to." — JANE AUSTEN.

What part of Bath do you think they will settle in? — JANE AUSTEN.

I am struck, almost into silence, at my own pert little protestant mind, which never thought for a moment of asking what the church had been built for. — RUSKIN.

It exhilarated her . . . to receive his welcome and all the tender words he could think of. — MRS. OLIPHANT.

On Wednesday, as soon as my mail was finished, I had a wild whirl to look forward to. — STEVENSON.

They wanted to make a fire, but there were no matches to light it with.

It seemed a pity that in a land full of turkeys the Fishes couldn't have just one to make merry with.

The last two sentences come from a book written for children. In the best of such books, sentences ending with prepositions are of frequent occurrence.

A good author does not hesitate to put a preposition at the end of a sentence when, on grounds of clearness, force, or ease, he thinks it belongs there; but often, perhaps usually, he finds that it belongs somewhere else. For example : —

In the present edition I have revised and re-arranged the whole work . . . and have thus endeavored to render it more complete and more worthy of the indulgent reception with which it has been favored. — IRVING.

Yet, for most of us, the conception of means and ends covers the whole of life, and is the exclusive type or figure under which we represent our lives to ourselves. — PATER.

But the best romance becomes dangerous, if, by its excitement, it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for useless acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called upon to act. — RUSKIN.

Obviously, these passages are much smoother than they would be if they ended with the prepositions "with," "under," and "in."

Position of Phrases and Clauses. — A phrase or a clause sometimes stands where it interferes with the reader's ease.

I

This affords the other colleges
[or To the other colleges this
affords] just grounds for indig-
nation.

Most of Washington's portraits
have to me [or To me most of,
etc.] a mask-like appearance.

II

This affords just grounds to the
other colleges for indignation.

The majority of Washington's
portraits to me have a mask-like
appearance.

In the sentences under II, "to the other colleges" and "to me" stand where they jar on the ear. If the writers did not mean to emphasize these expressions, they should have put them after "affords" and "have"; if they did mean to emphasize them, they should have put them at the beginning.

I

She had not said a word to
Edith of the change which had
imperceptibly taken place, —
chiefly during the long, sleepless
night on the railway journey.

The true principles of contract
forbid allowing an action to a
third party who is in no way privy
to the agreement.

II

She had not said a word of the
change which had worked imper-
ceptibly, and chiefly in the long
sleepless night on the railway
journey to Edith.

The true principles of contract
forbid the allowing a third
party who is in no way privy to
the agreement an action.

The sentences under II are exceedingly clumsy because the phrases "to Edith" and "an action" are not in their natural places. In the last example, the loose form under I is more pleasing than the periodic form under II.¹

I

Perhaps their education taught
them something, — something val-
uable, if you will, — but one thing
it did not do.

II

Their education taught them
perhaps something — if you will
something valuable — but one
thing it did not do.

¹ See pages 375-376.

In the sentence under II, "if you will" and "perhaps," by separating words that belong together, clog the flow of thought.

I

The doctor's house, which had been the most hospitable house in Carlingford, would, of course, be shut up.

Of all women who have undertaken to write poetry, she is by far the best.

II

The doctor's house would, of course, be shut up, which had been the most hospitable house in Carlingford.

Of all women she is by far the best that ever took upon them the task of writing poetry.

Each of the sentences under II has two faults, — that of putting an important phrase in an obscure place, and that of separating the relative clause from the noun with which it belongs. The first fault is a sin against force and ease, the second a sin against clearness and ease.

EXERCISE CXCI

Rewrite each sentence in the order most conducive to ease : —

1. The weakness produced by the insufficient food has no doubt been¹ the chief cause of their death on, or very soon after, their arrival.

2. I wish to be much more with, and to work much more for, my children.

3. Francis, in this state of affairs, vacillated between the two parties.

4. She acknowledged that of their mutual affection she had no doubt, and² of their correspondence she was not astonished to hear.

5. Once, some good fairy put sixpence into a posie, and much astonished was the recipient.

6. I can guess of what you are thinking.

7. I came to the university with a view of sometime taking my doctorate.

¹ Is this the proper tense?

² What principle of clearness is violated?

8. The Republicans have gained thousands of voters by supporting prohibition who would long ago have left the party had it not taken this start.

9. Not in any case, though we believe his intentions were good, and although he had just married a charming wife, whose tact should have guided him, could he ever have been a success.

10. At a, for him, ridiculously early hour, he dressed and ordered his breakfast.

11. Culbert to this exposure attributes the affection of the lungs from which she is suffering.

12. In no instance were these certificates designed to nor did they circulate as money.

13. He had resolved, forgetful of birth and blood and all those gigantic considerations which, now that manhood had come upon him, he was bound always to bear in mind, he had resolved to sneak out to dinner.

In the choice, in the number, and in the order of words, study the reader's ease.

ONE WORD MORE

Some intelligent and faithful student who has toiled through this book will, perhaps, as he approaches the end of his labors, ask himself or his teacher: "What does it all mean? Of what practical value are all these details? Of what use is it to know whether this or that expression is good or bad English? How am I better off because I have learned that one form is preferable to another? What if my compositions are a little deficient in matters that mean so much to schoolmasters and grammarians but are of no consequence to people in general? If I have 'thoughts that breathe,' 'words that burn' will come at my bidding; if I have nothing to say, mastery of language is of no use."

These questions point to the thing still to be said, the most important of all: the study of English composition is useful or useless according as it is or is not a means

to a worthy end, the end of communicating to others what one sincerely believes. In the art of expression, as in other arts, there is little advantage either in possessing tools or in knowing how to handle them unless one means to do something with them—not necessarily some great thing, but a thing worth doing, and therefore worth doing well. The term “expression” implies the existence of something to express,—something known, thought, or imagined, or at least “some chime of fancy, wrong or right.” Unity of expression implies that the writer has bent his mind to a definite purpose; clearness, force, ease, imply that his language serves that purpose.

There are writers, indeed, who pay undue attention to form, some aiming at mechanical correctness with little regard to meaning, some at “felicities of diction” so called. There are others—and these are not few—who write as if they believed that the substantial merits of their work were so great as to counterbalance faults in expression.

The best writers avoid both extremes, for they believe that literature is, as Cardinal Newman defines it, “the expression of thought in language. By thought, I mean,” Newman goes on to say, “the ideas, feelings, views, reasonings, and other operations of the human mind. A great author, gentlemen, is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. I do not claim for him, as such, any great depth of thought, or breadth of view, or philosophy, or sagacity, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life, though these additional gifts he may have, and the more he has of them the greater he is; but I ascribe to him, as his characteristic gift, in a large sense the faculty of Expression. He is master of the twofold Logos, the thought and the word, distinct, but inseparable from each other. He may, if so be, elaborate

his compositions, or he may pour out his improvisations, but in either case he has but one aim, which he keeps steadily before him, and is conscientious and single-minded in fulfilling. That aim is to give forth what he has within him; and from his very earnestness it comes to pass that, whatever be the splendour of his diction or the harmony of his periods, he has with him the charm of an incommunicable simplicity. Whatever be his subject, high or low, he treats it suitably and for its own sake."

Some authors have, no doubt, achieved distinction as masters of expression in spite of the fact that they had no school or college training in English; but most, if not all, of this class — Franklin and Lincoln are notable examples — had great natural gifts, which they made the most of by persistent labor and unsparing self-criticism. By attending to small things, each trained himself for the great work he was to do.

Although we may not have either their gifts or their "infinite capacity for taking pains," we have advantages that they missed, advantages that impose on us corresponding obligations. If we fail to do our best in small matters because we cherish the belief that as soon as we have something to say we shall be able to write well enough for our purpose, we may be mortified to discover, when it is too late, that, although "the spirit is willing," the pen is weak.

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